

JUL 27 2010

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5501

July 20, 2010

Mr. Miguel A. Rolón, Executive Director
Caribbean Fishery Management Council
268 Muñoz Rivera Ave., Suite 1108
San Juan Puerto Rico 00918-1920

Dear Mr. Rolón:

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute my perspectives on the proposed management alternatives before the Caribbean Fishery Management Council as it relates to setting annual catch limits for the U.S. Caribbean fishery.

For generations, fishing has played a tremendous role in the economy and culture of the Virgin Islands. To successfully preserve this important resource however, it is important that there is increased collaboration between the Council, local and federal regulators and relevant stakeholders. Of particular concern to me is the "one size fits all" approach that appears to be guiding the decision making process. I would also like to reiterate the importance of setting individual annual catch limits for each island district and not a single one for the "U.S. Caribbean". There is valid concern that categorizing St. Croix, St. Thomas-St. John and Puerto Rico into a single collective would only commit a greater disservice to the goal of sustainably managing our fisheries as it blatantly ignores the differences inherent to each island community. To that end, I want to make clear that I cannot support the preferred alternative that reflects a scalar of .75 without further investigation of its applicability and relevance specific to St. Croix and St. Thomas-St. John catch effort. I hope you take this into consideration as you proceed with your deliberations.

On Monday, July 21st, President Obama issued an executive order that emphasizes the need for comprehensive and collaborative efforts for determining management strategies, and calls for the need to preserve the social, cultural and historic value of our fisheries and fishing communities. In the spirit of this announcement, I encourage you to consider a more collaborative approach to protecting the U.S. Caribbean's marine resources. While I do recognize that there has been a greater attempt to collaborate with Virgin Islands' stakeholders, rarely do final management actions reflect such. It is my hope that future efforts demonstrate a stronger commitment to balancing stakeholder input with Council priorities.

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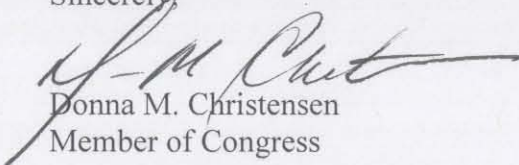
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Letter to Mr. Miguel A. Rolón
Re: U.S. Caribbean Fishery Management
July 21, 2010

Lastly, I submit that we use existing USVI-specific data to set ACLs and take time to implement the new data collection program for a period of 1-5 years while we address the uncertainty that has plagued the process for some time.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working together to seek resolution to the issues before us.

Sincerely,



Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress