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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-3303

January 23, 2012

The Honorable Samuel D. Rauch III  
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries  
NOAA Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

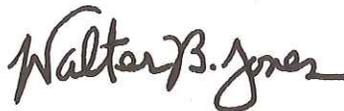
Dear Administrator Rauch:

I am writing to support the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NCDMF), the North Carolina Fisheries Association (NCFA) and many North Carolina fishermen who have asked your agency for a 45-day extension of the public comment period on the proposed Amendment 5 to the 2006 Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species Fisheries Management Plan. The comment period is currently scheduled to close on February 12, 2013.

As leaders of NCDMF and NCFA have pointed out to your staff, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the science behind the proposed amendment, as well as its economic impact. Questions also exist about whether the process being used to advance the amendment is appropriate. Additional time is necessary to clarify these issues so that those affected can provide adequate comments. In so doing, all involved can work towards a resolution that benefits both the stocks and the fishermen.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress