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October 31, 2014

Mr. Russell F. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
International Fisheries, NOAA
HCHB, 14th & Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230 – 0001

Mrs. Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator
NOAA Fisheries
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Smith and Administrator Sobeck:

On behalf of bluefin tuna fishermen in Eastern North Carolina and across the Atlantic seaboard, I am writing to strongly urge you to follow the recent management recommendation of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) scientists and **to fight at the upcoming ICCAT meeting for an increase in the western Atlantic bluefin tuna quota from 1,750 to 2,200 metrics tons.**

As you know, at the ICCAT science meetings earlier this month, scientists revealed that western and eastern bluefin tuna stocks have improved dramatically. In fact, the western bluefin stock is now over twice the size suggested in previous assessments and is more than rebuilt.

With these updated stock assessments in hand, ICCAT scientists concluded that the western Atlantic quota could be increased from the existing 1,750 metric tons to up to 2,250 metric tons without reducing the spawning stock biomass through 2019.

For decades U.S. bluefin tuna fishermen have been forced to swallow steep quota reductions in order to rebuild the stock. The economic costs to fishermen, their families and they communities they support, have been severe. Now that science shows the stock is fully rebuilt, that sacrifice should not go unrewarded.

To keep the faith with U.S. fishermen and support the economies of our coastal communities, I again respectfully urge you to follow the science and do all you can at the November ICCAT meeting to secure an increase in the western bluefin quota to 2,200 metric tons.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response, and to a positive outcome at ICCAT.

Sincerely,

Thank you! Walter B. Jones

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress