March 11, 2022

Ms. Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Ms. Coit:

Thank you for your agency’s letter of Jan. 11, 2022, requesting that I nominate a slate of qualified candidates for consideration by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for an obligatory appointment to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

N.C. Gen. Stat.§ 113-259 charges the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) with the responsibility of compiling a list of nominees for consideration by the governor for South Atlantic Fishery Management Council appointments. The Commission provided the names of Mr. Robert (Tim) Griner, Mr. Brian (Scott) Buff, Mr. Charles (Charlie) Locke, and Mr. Thomas Newman for my consideration as nominees for an obligatory appointment to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. I concur with the Commission recommendations and am forwarding these names to you as North Carolina’s nominees. The nominees are presented without order or preference.

Due to the statutory makeup of the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission (please see enclosed list), compilation of the list of nominees by that body meets the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1852(b)(2)(C), that each nomination be made in consultation with the commercial and recreational fishing interests of the state. The Commission makes every effort to encourage and seek out qualified women and minority candidates during this process. All the nominees are residents of North Carolina. All nominees, by reason of their occupational or other experience, scientific expertise or training, are knowledgeable regarding the conservation and management of the commercial or recreational harvest of the fisheries resources of North Carolina.

Following is a brief summary of the experience that qualifies each nominee to serve as a member of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council:

Mr. Robert (Tim) Griner (Commercial). Mr. Griner was born and raised in Charlotte, NC but grew up fishing the inshore and offshore waters of Brunswick County, NC. He earned a B.S. in Engineering from North Carolina State University and had a successful career in civil engineering, mostly in commercial construction.
In 2009, business began to slow, and Mr. Griner found himself spending more time fishing. He began sharing his catch with family and friends; after some of his friends showed their chef friends those fish, the chefs approached Mr. Griner to see if he would be interested in supplying fish for a few local Charlotte restaurants. In 2010, Mr. Griner obtained his state and federal dealer and vessel permits and started the Charlotte Fish Company. The business started with small trips, bringing back fish for just a few restaurants, but since then Mr. Griner has focused on building a clientele of small Charlotte restaurants whose menus cater to use of locally sourced ingredients. He now supplies over 60 restaurants in the Charlotte area. Mr. Griner holds federal vessel permits for snapper/grouper, dolphin/wahoo, and king and Spanish mackerel. In addition to the two vessels he owns, Mr. Griner also packs fish for two additional vessels out of Brunswick County. Over the past several years, Mr. Griner has become more involved in management of the fishery, attending South Atlantic Council public hearings, including Snapper Grouper Visioning Project port meetings. He was appointed to North Carolina’s Obligatory Seat on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council in 2016 and serves on several committees and has served as the South Atlantic Council’s liaison at Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meetings. He also served as a Council representative on several Southeast Data and Assessment Review stock assessments.

Mr. Brian (Scott) Buff (Commercial). Mr. Buff was born and raised in Morganton, NC and moved to Brunswick County, NC in the late 1990s. He purchased his first commercial vessel in 1998. Today, Mr. Buff owns and/or operates seven snapper/grouper vessels in the South Atlantic and two in the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, he owns one shrimp vessel, one Gulf of Mexico charter vessel, a fish house in Supply, NC and two retail markets in Southport, NC and Supply, NC, respectively. Mr. Buff has also held a 100-Ton Master License for 17 years. He is currently on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Snapper-Grouper Advisory Panel. Mr. Buff is also the owner of a general contracting company in Oak Island, NC since 2003.

Mr. Charles (Charlie) Locke (Commercial). Mr. Locke is a full-time, dayboat commercial fisherman and U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain harvesting sustainable seafood off the Outer Banks, N.C., using multiple gears including float and anchored gillnet, bottom and surface longline, bandit reel, and trolling. Harvested species range from inshore net fish, such as sea mullet and Spanish mackerel, to offshore bottom fish which includes tilefish, grouper, and amberjack. He is one of just roughly a dozen commercial directed shark fishermen in North Carolina. Mr. Locke serves on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council’s Mackerel-Cobia Advisory Panel, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Bluefish Advisory Panel, and NOAA Fisheries Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team as a North Carolina Gill Net Representative. Mr. Locke also served on the
North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission’s Advisory Committees for the Striped Mullet and Kingfishes Fishery Management Plans. In addition to his fishing and advisor experience, Mr. Locke has participated in several cooperative projects.

**Mr. Thomas Newman (Commercial).** Mr. Newman is the owner/operator of the 40-ft. F/V Gotta Go with his homeport in Hatteras, NC. He has been commercial fishing for 25 years, mostly in North Carolina but ranging as far north as New York and has fished many seasons in Virginia. He is currently serving on the Mackerel Cobia Advisory Panel (South Atlantic Fishery Management Council) and Northern Regional Advisory Panel (North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission). Mr. Newman holds permits and fishes for Spanish mackerel, bluefish, spiny dogfish, smooth dogfish, king mackerel, croakers, large and small coastal sharks and monkfish, species which are mainly managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. He is a member of the Coastal Carolina River Watch, serves on the Citizen Science Projects Advisory Team (SAFMC), and is involved in state and federal fisheries management issues working directly with fisheries managers and industry groups. Mr. Newman is also involved in climate change scenario planning and is looking forward to working with recreational, commercial, and ecosystem stakeholders to get ahead of these issues we are already seeing while planning for the future. He believes that flexibility, adaptation, and all user groups working together are going to be imperative for the future of our oceans. Mr. Newman received a B.S. in Biology from Furman University in 2008. His focus was towards wildlife management, but he also did a study abroad marine biology program in the Florida Keys and Belize directly observing habitats and multiple aquatic species.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the nomination process for a N.C. obligatory seat to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Roy Cooper

RAC/swh

Enclosures

cc: Elizabeth S. Biser
    Kathy Rawls
    Rob Bizzell
    Cole Jordan
March 30, 2022

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

Please find attached the completed applications from three qualified individuals who I am pleased to nominate for the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Obligatory seat currently held by Christopher C. Conklin of South Carolina. This seat is scheduled to become vacant on August 10, 2022, following nine years of Mr. Conklin’s outstanding representation and service to the Council.

Based on their training, experience, knowledge, and occupational background each of these applicants meets the requirements listed in Section 302(b)(2)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Specific qualifications of each include:

- **Gary Borland** (Recreational Sector) - Over 40 years of experience in the marine fishing industry; 21 years of experience as a charterboat owner/operator; extensive work experience with significant leadership and management roles in fishing tackle and gear manufacturing, marketing, and sales; over 40 years of working directly with a broad spectrum of recreational fishermen to understand their practices, needs and values; currently Director of Sales SE Region for Pure Fishing, Inc.; actively engaged in marine fisheries outreach, education and conservation activities.

- **Garrett Lacy** (Recreational Sector) - Life-long coastal recreational fisherman and passionate fishing conservationist; 7 years of experience as a charterboat owner/operator and small business owner; actively involved in the promotion, development, and success of South Carolina’s charterboat industry and serves as Vice President of the states’ first-ever Coastal Fishing Guides Association; actively involved in numerous recreational fishing and fishing conservation organizations; tracks and participates in the state’s
legislative process related to the development of laws which impact marine fisheries and natural resources conservation and management; supports and participates in fisheries education and outreach programs and projects to promote and enhance the states’ diverse marine resources and fisheries.

- **Stephen Goldfinch** (Recreational Sector) – BS Biology, MBA, J.D. Life-long recreational fisherman; represents South Carolina Senate District 34 (Charleston, Georgetown & Horry Counties) and resides in Murrells Inlet; member of the S.C. Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee for 10 years, as well as the S.C. Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee; 25 years as a commercial spear fisherman and a Master Captain for over 20 years; member of the Coastal Conservation Association and owner of an outdoor publication promoting fishing and the fishing industry, Trilogy Outdoors, LLC; dedicated to resolving environmental and coastal concerns surrounding coastal marine fishing.

The individuals nominated were selected after extensive consultation with representatives of South Carolina’s recreational and commercial fishing communities as well as the following fishery and natural resource-focused organizations and groups:

- South Carolina Coastal Conservation Association
- South Carolina Boating and Fishing Alliance
- South Carolina Coastal Fishing Guide Association
- South Carolina Council for Sustainable Fishing
- South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
- Port Royal Foundation
- PEW Charitable Trust
- The Nature Conservancy
- South Carolina Coastal Conservation League
- South Carolina Wildlife Federation
- Key Commercial Seafood Dealers and Charterboat Operators

In accordance with guidance provided in the Governor’s Guidance Kit for Nominations to Regional Fishery Management Councils, qualified women and/or minority candidates were considered. All nominees have undergone initial background reviews with no issues detected.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit the names of these three fine candidates as nominees for the upcoming vacant Obligatory seat on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. If you have any questions or require any other information necessary in the consideration of this nomination package, please do not hesitate to contact my staff.

Yours very truly,

Henry McMaster