



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

March 15, 2023

Secretary Gina Raimondo  
U.S. Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Delivered electronically

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

This letter is in response to your request for nominations to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council at-large seat that is currently held by the State of Florida by William "Chester" Brewer. Florida has been the Fishing and Boating Capital of the World for many years. It is essential that this at-large seat be maintained by our state. Throughout the past month, my office consulted with members of the recreational and commercial fishing community. This year we received an unprecedented amount of interest in this seat, including individuals and organizations who are deeply invested in the management of our marine fisheries resources. In addition to the feedback from the fishing community and fishing organizations, my office received many comments from the boat manufacturing community, boat related industry, tackle manufacturers, and other fishing related businesses. A subset of those are listed here:

American Sportfishing Association  
The Billfish Foundation  
Bonefish and Tarpon Trust  
Center for Sportfishing Policy  
Coastal Conservation Association of Florida  
Congressional Sportsman Foundation  
Destin Charter Boat Association  
Florida Guides Association  
Florida Keys Commercial Fishermen's Association  
Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association  
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation  
Lower Keys Guides Association  
The Ocean Conservancy  
Old Salts Fishing Foundation  
Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance  
International Game Fish Association  
West Palm Beach Fishing Club



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Yamaha Motor Corporation  
Congressman Gus Bilirakis

Boat manufacturers including Maverick Boat Company, Everglades Boats, Correct Craft, Pursuit Boats, Crevalle Boats, Viking Sport Cruisers, Fish Tale Boats, EdgeWater Boats, and Dorado custom boats

Fishing publications including Sport Fishing Magazine, Florida Sportsman Magazine

Numerous fishing related businesses including L&S Bait Company, Dogfish Tackle, and King Plastic Corporation

After careful consideration of each applicant, I am pleased to nominate the individuals listed below for the at-large seat currently held by William "Chester" Brewer. These nominees are well qualified and would make excellent candidates for appointment to the South Atlantic Council. I am providing my nominations in order of preference and ask that you give strong consideration to the preferred nominee.

I am recommending **Robert Spottswood, Jr** as the preferred choice for appointment to the at-large seat on the South Atlantic Council. Mr. Spottswood is the President of Spottswood Companies, Inc, which operates several restaurants, a commercial fish house, and several marinas. He is an avid recreational angler and diver. He is a graduate of the Marine Resource Education Program on federal fisheries management. Mr. Spottswood has a bachelor's degree in food and resources economics from the University of Florida and a juris doctor from Nova Southeastern University. The son of a Cuban immigrant, his family has resided in Key West for eight generations. Mr. Spottswood serves on a multitude of boards including the Nature Conservancy of Florida, the Fish and Wildlife Foundation of Florida, and the Key West Yacht Club. He has spent countless hours bringing fishermen together with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to develop reasonable management solutions that promote access and sustainability to many important fisheries' conservation challenges, such as barracuda, blackfin tuna, and mutton snapper. Mr. Spottswood has recently worked with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary on practical solutions within the Restoration Blueprint that will conserve the resources of the Sanctuary and allow sustainable fishing to continue. Mr. Spottswood represents the recreational and "other" sectors.

My second recommendation is **Gerald "Brock" Pecknold**. He is the Owner of the international sales company, GBPecknold, Inc. He is a life member of Coastal Conservation Association and a member of Bonefish & Tarpon Trust. Mr. Pecknold serves as the habitat restoration chair of the Broward County chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association. He is an avid recreational angler and an open water diver. He believes, with his passion for



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recreational fishing and diving, he would be a great asset to the South Atlantic Council. Mr. Pecknold represents the recreational sector.

My third recommendation is Mark Carter. He has been the Vice President of Engineering and Chief Scientist at Exxelia Dearborn, Inc since 1982. Mr. Carter has been the past state chair of the Coastal Conservation Association of Florida. He currently serves on the Board for the Center for Sportfishing Policy and the Nature Conservancy. He has served on the South Atlantic Council's Habitat and Ecosystem Advisory Panel in the past. He earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Central Florida. Mr. Carter believes that serving on the South Atlantic Council would be the greatest privilege, working to protect and preserve our nation's marine resources for future generations. Mr. Carter represents the recreational sector.

In summary, my recommendations for the seat are as follows:

1. Robert Spottswood, Jr
2. Gerald "Brock" Pecknold
3. Mark Carter

I appreciate your consideration of my nominations for Council appointments and look forward to seeing citizens of Florida continue their service on the Council in ways that will help ensure wise and sustainable use of our saltwater fishery resources. Florida continues to include quality candidates for the South Atlantic Council and currently has two women serving. We continue to solicit applications from all qualified individuals for appointments across the state, including women, minorities, and underserved communities. Please contact my office if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron DeSantis".

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

RD/ca



HENRY McMASTER  
GOVERNOR

March 15, 2023

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 At-Large seat currently held by Kerry Marhefka of South Carolina, who is completing her first term on the Council and is eligible for reappointment for this seat, to become vacant on August 10, 2023.

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:

- Anthony Constant (Recreational Sector) – Life-long recreational fisherman; Lives in a commercial fishing area, shrimping boats; 20 years charter experience in the South Atlantic and Gulf, inshore and offshore; Decker larger sportfish boats in tournaments from the Bahamas up to the Outer Banks; Captained many tournament boats in the South Atlantic; Owned and operated a tackle/boating store in Beaufort, S.C.; Dock Master for Port Royal Landing Marina for about six years; Weigh Master for the Southern Redfish Tournament Trail for seven years; involved in many tournaments – working and competing; CCA S.C. State Board Member; CCA National Board Member; SAFMC Grouper/Snapper AP Board Member; Commercial License General Contractor – water endorsement
- 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.

- Kerry Marhefka (Commercial Sector) – BS, Marine Biology; 10 years of experience as a fisheries biologist on staff with the SAFMC; over 14 years of experience in the direct operation of a successful multi-faceted family-run commercial fishing business, involving vessel ownership, fishing, wholesale, and retail activities; over 22 years of experience working for and with the SAFMC, including current service in her first term as a productive Council member. She currently serves as Chair of the Council’s Dolphin Wahoo and Citizen Science Committees, Vice Chair of the Snapper Grouper Committee, and an active member of six other important SAFMC Committees.

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

- South Carolina Council for Sustainable Fishing
- South Carolina Coastal Fishing Guide Association
- South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
- Key Commercial Seafood Dealers and Charterboat Operators
- Previous SAFMC members with commercial fisheries backgrounds
- Previous Council seat applicants
- SAFMC staff and Council members with knowledge of SC fisheries
- SCDNR Office of Fisheries Management staff

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 sought out and considered, and one woman candidate is being nominated. 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 this soon to be vacated At-Large 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