

Mr. Tom Nies
 New England Fisheries Management Council
 50 Water Street
 Newburyport, Massachusetts 01950



RE: **Proposed Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Ecological Research Area**

Dear Mr. Nies:

The proposed Stellwagen Bank Sanctuary Ecological Research Area ("SERA") has been the subject of discussion and ongoing change the past few years. As a recently appointed member of the NEFMC Enforcement Advisory Panel I was made aware of the recent SERA recommended by the NEFMC Groundfish and Habitat Committees. Over the past several years the proposed extent of the SERA and charter/head boat and recreational fishing limitations in this area has changed ranging from complete shutdown to tuna and shark fishing only that has concerned me and others since its inception.

As an owner and operator of a charter boat fishing out of Green Harbor, Massachusetts I strongly oppose any changes to the Western Gulf of Maine closed area and strongly support Alternative 1, No Action. The proposed SERA is located within our prime fishing grounds that will have a significant detrimental impact on charters and could put me as well as other charter/head boat operators out of business. The closure would require that we travel further distances east that will be cost prohibited. We are already traveling significant distances to land cod and bottom fish east of Stellwagen Bank.

The recreational angler has little if at all no detrimental impact on the sediment and bottom dwelling life in this area using weights, cod jigs and hook and line to harvest fish for personal consumption. Any changes other than Status Quo, Alternative 1, No Action will virtually be the end of the charter/party industry from the South Shore of Massachusetts which fish Stellwagen Bank. This will also have a detrimental impact as a result of loss of revenue to the local hotels, tackle shops, marinas, boat dealers etc. in the local area.

The challenges associated with the enforcement of this closed area were well presented before the Enforcement Oversight Committee.

In conclusion, I strongly support Alternative No. 1, No Action. If you have any questions please feel free to email or give me a call at (617) 291-8914.

Very truly yours,

Capt. Michael J. Pierdinock
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Copy: Mr. John Bullard, Administrator, NMFS, NERO
Mr. RIP Cunningham, Chairman NEFMC
Mr. Barry Gibson, Chairman, Recreational Advisory Panel
Mr. Frank Blount, Chairman, Enforcement Oversight Committee
Mr. Stephen James, President, Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Assoc
Mr. Paul Diodati, Director, Massachusetts Division of Marine
Fisheries
Dr. David Pierce, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries
Mr. Dave Preble, NFMC