



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

DEC - 5 2006

Tab G, No. 3(a)

Dear Reviewer:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has recently completed a draft Environmental Assessment (EA), Regulatory Impact Review (RIR), Initial Regulatory Flexibility Analysis (IRFA), and proposed rule to implement regulatory changes for the U.S. Atlantic swordfish fishery to improve the ability of U.S. vessels to fully harvest the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish quota.

Under 304(g)(1)(A) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act and under the regulatory process for managing highly migratory species (HMS), NMFS is required to consult with affected Fishery Management Councils, ICCAT commissioners and advisory groups, and the Advisory Panel established under the Magnuson-Stevens Act regarding proposed management actions.

We are requesting your comments on the enclosed proposed rule and Draft EA/RIR/IRFA. The Draft EA and proposed rule are also available electronically on the website of the HMS Management Division at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/>.

Written comments may be submitted to Sari Kiraly, HMS Management Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, emailed to SF1.110206A@noaa.gov or faxed to (301) 713-1917 by January 31, 2007. If you have questions, please call Sari Kiraly at (301) 713-2347.

Sincerely,

Margo Schulze-Haugen
Chief
Highly Migratory Species Management
Division