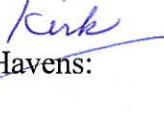




410 Severn Avenue Suite 112 | Annapolis, MD 21403 | 410-267-5700

January 26, 2015

Dr. Kirk Havens, Chair
CBP Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
645 Contees Wharf Road
P.O. Box 28
Edgewater, Maryland 21037


Dear Dr. Havens:

On behalf of the Management Board, thank you for the opportunity to respond to STAC's review panel report entitled "Review of the Report of the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team Invasive Catfish Task Force." STAC has provided a thorough and thoughtful assessment of the Invasive Catfish report recommendations.

The STAC review was provided to and reviewed by the Invasive Catfish Task Force (ICTF) following its release in November 2014 and was presented to the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (Fisheries GIT) at their December 2-3, 2014 meeting. In general, the ICTF and Fisheries GIT agree with STAC that the Invasive Catfish report requires updates (the initial report was delivered to STAC in April 2014) and that the report should more comprehensively communicate the uncertainty associated with the recommendations. The ICTF will address the STAC comments over the coming weeks and plans to present a revised report to the Fisheries GIT in the spring.

In particular, the Fisheries GIT is considering the STAC recommendation to develop an invasive catfish management plan. The purposes of the initial Invasive Catfish report—the first step in an adaptive process—were to raise awareness of the invasive catfish issue to the Management Board, gain consensus among jurisdictions that coordinated management actions are needed to control invasive catfish, and reach agreement on a set of potential actions. The next intended step was to have the jurisdictions prioritize the recommendations and develop coordinated implementation plans. This step was put on hold pending STAC review. The Fisheries GIT plans to continue this prioritization process taking the STAC comments into consideration.


The Management Board recognizes that, concurrent with the STAC review, significant activity on the invasive catfish issue is underway including public outreach events, development of nongovernmental groups such as Wide Net Project (widenetproject.org), newly established

markets, and an expanding fishery. The Management Board will continue to monitor these efforts and work with the Fisheries GIT to evaluate if they are having the desired outcomes of reducing invasive catfish spread and mitigating adverse effects on the Bay ecosystem.

The Management Board is in full agreement with STAC that more information is needed in many areas related to invasive catfish in the Chesapeake Bay. We must address gaps in scientific understanding to be adaptive moving forward and to increase the likelihood of successful invasive catfish management. The Management Board will continue to work with the Fisheries GIT and STAC to ensure a coordinated Bay program response to controlling invasive catfish.

In closing, on behalf of the Management Board, please extend my thanks to the review team for their time and effort. We remain, as always, appreciative of STAC's role in providing independent insight and guidance in management of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Sincerely,



Nicholas A. DiPasquale, Chair
Management Board

cc: Management Board
Goal Implementation Team Chairs