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MPH- 605  
Environmental Health

**Subject: Docket No. 060928250-6250-01 Relating to 50 CFR Part 229-comments regarding Taking of Marine Mammals Incidental to Commercial Fishing Operations; Atlantic Large Whale Reduction Plan**

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

As a representative of the MPH/MBA Dual Master's Program through Benedictine University, I fully support the National Marine Fisheries proposed recommendation to expand the southeastern U.S. restricted area for gillnetting to preserve Right Whale populations. The current proposal's inclusion of incorporation of restricting the periods for gillnetting to associate with the Right Whale calving season would be upholding the safety and within the best interest of the public's safety.

As mentioned within the proposed submission, the northern right whale population has been severely affected by gillnetting and other commercial fishing techniques since 1935. Even though the population is under the protection of several other acts such as the Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the population is estimated to be at or less than 300. The current proposal would provide a wider boundary to protect the northern right whale population for death or dismemberment from entanglement due to gillnetting gear being utilized within their birthing grounds. By allowing for the termination of gill net fishing during restricted times, would be in keeping with the goals previously set by the Marine Mammal Protection Act as well as The Endangered Species Act.

Warm regards,

Stephanie Gutierrez

