



Florida House of Representatives

Representative Matt Gaetz

District 4

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November 18, 2015

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Re: Support for the ECRA Lionfish Population Control Pilot Program Proposal

To Whom It May Concern,

The FFWCC is well aware that the invasive lionfish is causing damage to the native saltwater fishery of the State of Florida. This situation is of great concern not only for the future sustainability of our native fishery but, also for the economic consequences our State will surely suffer if we continue to take insufficient action to mitigate this building crisis. As a representative of the people of this State, it is my responsibility to protect the interest of the people and to make sure that their tax dollars are spent wisely.

ECRA's Lionfish Population Control Pilot Program Proposal is financially sustainable, the program goals are well defined and, success will be verifiable. This proposal has the potential to remove 25,000 lionfish from the Florida Panhandle in 2 years or less, at almost no cost to the taxpayers. This plan is a win-win for the environment and for taxpayers.

This proposal encourages divers to remove lionfish aggressively every time they dive while allowing them to dive when the sea conditions are safe as opposed to motivating them with limited and pre-determined derby dates that may put them at higher risk of injury or death due to unpredictable and sometimes dangerous sea conditions.

I strongly support the ECRA lionfish population control proposal that was provided to the Full Commission by Ms. Candy Hansard, at the April 2015 FFWCC meeting. This proposal is cost effective and the number of fish required to provide motivation to the divers is biologically insignificant. I encourage the FFWCC to support the

Committees:

Finance & Tax, Chair
Regulatory Affairs
State Affairs
Health Quality
Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal
Affordable Healthcare Access

Emerald Coast Reef Association proposal as a pilot program by providing the tags requested and allowing the pilot program to be run as proposed.

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Gaetz". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Matt Gaetz
District 4