

Thorco, Inc. dba Viking Diving
4612-A Bellview Ave.
Pensacola, FL 32526
(850) 916-DIVE (3483)
(888) 848-DIVE toll free



21 May 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is intended to express our support for the Emerald Coast Reef Association, Inc. proposal for Lionfish Control. The fish tag idea is the most effective and viable incentive proposal that I have seen to date for the removal of this damaging and invasive species from local waters. It just makes sense. Giving the divers who are our only line of defense the incentive and reward for their efforts will potentially help reduce this threat to our local fisheries.

As a charter boat operator in the Gulf of Mexico, I encounter fishing boats almost every day. In years past there has always been conflict between divers and fishermen but lately I have seen that even the local fishermen now encourage dive boats to come to dive where they are fishing in hopes that we remove the lionfish from the sites that they have seen viable to their fishing. I have listened to the arguments from FWC and others on why this proposal will not work, but the reality is that not only will it work if given the opportunity, but the longer we delay in action the more devastating these fish will become to our ecosystems and then we all will suffer the results of lack of action.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions regarding our support of this proposal and I look forward to our lawmakers making the proper decisions to benefit the resources we all rely on for our State's prosperity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Thorsen".

Capt. Timothy Thorsen
USMM/USCG Master 100 GT
President, Thorco Inc. dba Viking Diving,
(850) 916-DIVE (3483) local
(888) 848-DIVE toll free
www.VikingDivingPensacola.com