



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

November 2, 2009

Mr. Venable Proctor
Chairman
Coastal Conservation Association
6919 Portwest Drive, Suite 100
Houston, TX 77024

Dear Mr. Proctor:

Thank you for your letter in support of listing Atlantic bluefin tuna in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). The Obama Administration shares the concerns you expressed about the status of Atlantic bluefin tuna—particularly the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock—which suffers from catch levels set far in excess of scientifically recommended levels and from illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

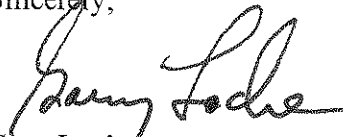
Compliance by other countries with the International Convention for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas' (ICCAT) conservation and management measures remains a concern to the United States. We have repeatedly attempted to take action through ICCAT's Compliance Committee, albeit sometimes with limited success.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has statutory authority for implementation of CITES, although the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides expertise regarding marine species. In July 2009, DOI published a *Federal Register* notice soliciting recommendations on potential species proposals to be offered by the United States at the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES in March 2010. The public comment period ended in September 2009, and all public comments received have been reviewed.

The United States announced its decision on October 14, 2009, to support the Principality of Monaco's CITES proposal to list Atlantic bluefin tuna in Appendix I. We will consider amending or withdrawing support for the Monaco proposal if ICCAT adopts significantly strengthened management and compliance measures.

I appreciate your continued interest in this important matter.

Sincerely,


Gary Locke