LOUISIANA WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Resolution of Support for Sustainability Certification of Louisiana Fisheries

WHEREAS, Louisiana commercial fisheries dominate landings both by volume and value in the Gulf of Mexico, one of the most productive fisheries regions of the United States, and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) conducts stock assessment using the best available science per Louisiana Revised Statute 56:638.4 including fisheries independent and dependent data collected through LDWF, and

WHEREAS, stock assessments conducted by LDWF establish conservation benchmarks for overfishing and overfished status of fisheries and/or targets for fishing effort and/or biomass, and

WHEREAS, LDWF uses federal stock assessments for fisheries of shared jurisdiction, federal fisheries management requires use of best available science per the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSA) National Standards One and Two (Nat. St. 1 and/or 2.), and

WHEREAS, federal stock assessments conducted by NOAA establish conservation benchmarks for overfishing and overfished status of fisheries and/or targets for fishing effort and/or biomass that account for sources of uncertainty per MSA National Standard One, and (Nat. St. 1)

WHEREAS, actions taken by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission (Commission) follow the directive of LA Statute 56:638.5 which requires that fisheries be maintained within conservation standards, and

WHEREAS, maintaining healthy fish and shellfish stocks is in the best interests of the State of Louisiana as it provides sustainable harvest and improves economics within the fishery, and

WHEREAS, sustainability certification standards for fisheries require a) a precautionary approach within the management system, recognizing the uncertainties of science and management, and b) specific management harvest control rules in response to overfishing or overfished stocks, and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Revised Statute 56.6(25a) provides the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission with authority to set seasons, times, places, size limits, quotas, daily take, and possession limits, based upon biological and technical data, for all wildlife and fish, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission does hereby commit to precautionary decision making in setting harvest practices, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should the fishing mortality exceed the target and/or overfishing limits and/or exploitable biomass fall below the target and/or overfished limits established by stock assessments and fishery management plans for the timeframe specified within those documents as appropriate to each species, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall come before the Commission with a series of management options for the Commission to review and act upon, designed to keep the fishery from becoming overfished, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that management options for review and action shall be designed to maintain or rebuild sustainable biomass and may include provisions to reduce fishing pressure such as emergency closures, time-based closures and spatial closures, changes in size or bag limits, gear modifications and allowances, or other management measures as appropriate.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jerri G. Smitko

Chair, Wildlife and Fisheries Commission