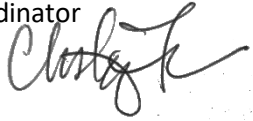




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Silver Spring, MD 20910

MEMORANDUM FOR: FILE

FROM: Christy Fellas, DWH Environmental compliance Coordinator
NOAA Restoration Center 

DATE: October 18, 2024

SUBJECT: Open Ocean TIG Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #4
Fish and Water Column Invertebrates Restoration Projects: ESA No
Effect Determination

Based on my review of project materials including the Biological Evaluation forms (Fall 2024), and in coordination with representatives from NOAA's Protected Resource Division (PRD) in the Southeast Regional Office, the NOAA Restoration Center (RC) determined that Fish and Water Column Invertebrates restoration projects listed below will have no effect on species or habitats listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under the jurisdiction of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

- Return 'Em Right: Species and Area Expansion (Reduction of Postrelease Mortality from Barotrauma in Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Recreational Fisheries)
- Communication Networks and Mapping Tools to Reduce Fish Mortality
- Communication, Adaptive Management, Planning, and Integration

These projects include outreach, planning, data analysis and other land based activities. Some project tasks such as distributing gear and enhancing observer coverage will happen on the water, but these efforts will not increase fishing effort or change fishery operations, therefore there is no effect to ESA-listed species.

If a project is modified or additional elements are added that could change this determination it will be reevaluated as appropriate.