



29<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION BERMUDA**

**AND**

**GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA**

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** is made this **29<sup>th</sup> Day of June 2023** between **FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION BERMUDA** (hereinafter called "FAB") of the one part and **GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA** in the said Islands (hereinafter called "GOVERNMENT")

## **PURPOSE**

This Memorandum of understanding (MOU) serves as a means to bridge the current impasse between Government and FAB regarding issues that have concerned the fishing industry for many years, and recent concerns surrounding the development of a Blue Prosperity Plan (i.e. Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) and Blue Economy Strategy).

## **WHEREAS**

FAB understands that the Government desires to achieve the goal of having 20% of the total Exclusive Economic Zone (180,000 square miles) fully protected in line with the goals and objectives set out in the draft Marine Spatial Plan as agreed by the BOPP Steering Committee.

The Government acknowledges that the FAB sees the value of geographic fishing closures when fishing presents a direct threat, as shown with clear and quantitative evidence, to a particular species or habitat but otherwise opposes all geographic based closures to fishing.

## **FAB agrees and commits to:**

1. Working with the BOPP to:
  - a. design the MSP protection designations for both the offshore and inshore areas, which in addition to fully protected areas, could include highly, lightly and minimally protected areas by the end of September 2023.
  - b. make recommendations on: (1) the phased implementation of the marine protected areas and (2) on the timeline for implementation of the other MSP objectives within the MSP proposal documents, especially those with regard to enforcement and licencing of recreational fishers.
2. Cooperating with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sampling efforts once recreational fishing licences have been implemented and recreational fishers are also required to cooperate with sampling, so that much needed data can be obtained to improve the assessments of fish stocks around the Island.
3. Providing the Ministry of Home Affairs with the name of one suitable candidate for each of the

following Committees and Boards: Bermuda Ocean Prosperity Programme (BOPP) Steering Committee; Marine Resources Board (MRB); and Commercial Fisheries Council (CFC). Additionally, FAB will provide up to four members for each of the new BOPP Stakeholder Focus Group sessions.

4. Participating fully in both the BOPP Steering Committee, the Stakeholder Focus Group sessions, and a new Sub-committee focused on fisheries related matters.
5. Acting as stewards of Bermuda's marine environment and encourage reporting of any illegal fishing activity to the DENR in a timely manner.

**GOVERNMENT agrees and commits to:**

1. Requiring that the BOPP works with FAB and considers changes proposed by FAB to the draft Marine Spatial Plan in line with the Goals and Objectives set out in the Plan.
2. Providing technical assistance in the form of the DENR's GIS Mapping Analyst to FAB in the development of its draft MSP map proposal for the consideration of the BOPP Sub-committee and Steering Committee.
3. Giving consideration to one suitable candidate for each of the following Committees and Boards: BOPP Steering Committee; Marine Resources Board; and Commercial Fisheries Council, and up to four members for each of the new BOPP Stakeholder Focus Group sessions.
4. Requiring that the BOPP forms a Sub-committee focused on fisheries related matters. The Sub-committee will mirror the role of the BOPP Science Committee in that it will make recommendations to the Steering Committee.
5. Requiring that the BOPP review and make amendments to the existing BOPP Steering Committee, the BOPP Stakeholder Focus Groups, and the new Sub-committee to include FAB representatives.
6. The Minister of Home Affairs may request alternative suggestions for Government Committees and Boards if the initial suggestions are not acceptable to the Government for any particular reason. Furthermore, the Minister appoints members of the MRB and CFC in accordance with the Fisheries Act 1972, and appointments for both the MRB and CFC have been decided for 2023.
7. Advise the FAB and all other stakeholders of any plans to make changes to the level of protection in Bermuda's EEZ and territorial waters per international agreements or agreements

with the UK Government. It should be noted that the Marine Spatial Plan will be a dynamic document subject to the scientific data, changes in the natural environment, and consultation. Any marine protected area proposed in the territorial waters should have good justification and rationale based on the best available scientific data as well as social, economic, and cultural criteria.

8. Providing full transparency as to the Government's financial commitment, investment and expenditures to date and expected in the near future on the development of the Blue Prosperity Plan.
9. Subject to Cabinet approval, annual licensing of all non-commercial (i.e. recreational/sport) fishers who wish to harvest fish from vessels for personal consumption. Included as part of the licence system will be the requirement for these fishers to report catch and effort data, inclusive of catch and release data, on an annual basis. *The MHA will keep FAB informed of progress on this matter.*
10. Subject to Cabinet approval, establishing additional harvest bag limits for non-commercial (i.e. recreational/sport) fishers in accordance with personal consumption needs and with reporting requirements. *The MHA will keep FAB informed of progress on this matter.*
11. Continuing to work through the BOPP and with the UK Government through the Blue Belt Ocean Shield Programme to implement the Bermuda Marine Enforcement Strategy with the aim of facilitating effective enforcement within the marine environment. *The MHA will keep FAB informed of progress on this matter.*
12. Actioning the timelines agreed in the final Blue Prosperity Plan and according to the legislative agenda.
13. Requiring that the BOPP consults with all stakeholders, including the FAB, regarding any changes in BOPP process or procedure.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the parties hereto have signed and delivered this Agreement and Memorandum the day and year first above written.

**FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION BERMUDA**

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in the presence of:

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**GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA**

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