A SENATE RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE PRIVATIZATION OF SOUTH ATLANTIC FEDERAL FISHERY RESOURCES THROUGH CATCH SHARE MANAGEMENT AND EFFORTS THROUGH EXEMPTED FISHING PERMITS OR OTHER MEANS TO CONDUCT PILOT CATCH SHARE PROGRAMS OR STUDIES.

Whereas, "catch share" is a term for fishery management strategies that allocate a specific portion of the total allowable fishery catch to individuals or other entities, effectively giving private ownership of federal fishery resources to individuals and corporations; and

Whereas, in 2010, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries adopted a national catch share policy, which states that "NOAA encourages the consideration and adoption of catch shares wherever appropriate in fishery management and ecosystem plans and their amendments, and will support the design, implementation, and monitoring of catch share programs"; and

Whereas, private ownership of federal fishery resources through catch share programs nationally has caused significant consolidation of fishing fleets, reducing access to the resource and causing significant fishing job losses to the detriment of fishing communities and the coastal economy; and

Whereas, a 2013 report by the Center for Investigative Reporting provides estimates that as many as 18,000 fishing jobs were lost and 3,700 vessels were no longer fishing in areas that had catch share programs, with those numbers being likely much higher now; and

Whereas, this year, a WVUE-TV, New Orleans, investigative report into the Gulf of Mexico commercial red snapper fishery catch share program stated that just "50 businesses and fishermen control 81% of the commercial red snapper allocation," causing many fishermen to lose access to the fishery or forcing them to pay exorbitant prices to buy or rent red snapper shares so they can remain employed in the fishery; and

Whereas, a 2013 NOAA study of the impacts of catch shares on southern New England fishermen and families found that 70% said they were "worse/much worse off" with catch shares; and

Whereas, fishery stakeholders in North Carolina and the South Atlantic are overwhelmingly opposed to catch share programs in federal waters as evidenced by 97% of the comments on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's long-range snapper-grouper fishery management plan being opposed to any form of catch shares; and

Whereas, studies by the Lenfest Ocean Program and reports by Food and Water Watch and others have shown that catch share programs provide no biological benefit or enhanced sustainability to fisheries; and

Whereas, saltwater fishing is economically very important to North Carolina, with recreational and commercial fishing in 2014 generating $1,500,000,000 and $115,000,000 in sales and supporting 16,007 and 3,220 jobs respectively, according to NOAA; Now, therefore, Be it resolved by the Senate:
SECTION 1. That members of the Senate, by this resolution, oppose the use of catch share fisheries management in federal waters off North Carolina and in the South Atlantic and any efforts through exempted fishing permits or other means to conduct pilot catch share programs or studies.

SECTION 2. The Principal Clerk shall transmit copies of this resolution to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, NOAA Fisheries, and the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission.

SECTION 3. This resolution is effective upon adoption.