Date [Insert the date]

**Subject line:**

You’ve Lost My Vote Forever! Fisheries QLD Spanish Mackerel Biomass Survey is a farce.

**Body Text:**

Dear Mr/Mrs [insert name of MP],

As a constituent in your electorate of [Insert the name of electorate], I would like to inform you and any future candidates of your party that you have lost my vote forever if you support the proposal of Fisheries QLD Managers to close or severely restrict the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Line Fishery for Recreational and Professional fishers. I will also actively encourage other members of the community, my family and friends to do the same.

Professional, Recreational and Spear fishers have been fishing well within the quotas/ guidelines set out by Fisheries Qld for decades. The Spanish Mackerel Line Fishery has a zero human footprint or an extremely limited footprint and has always been classified as sustainable by Fisheries QLDs marine biologists until a “New Working Group” and new “Biomass Estimate Model Survey” had been implemented earlier this year. The new “estimate” (and that’s what it is at best) suddenly has the stocks at a critically low level. How can this be so when Spanish Mackerel has been fished well below the quota limits set by Fisheries Qld since 2004 . Either there is a Green agenda being pushed here or Fisheries QLD Management have been incompetent with “**their”** handling of the East Coast Spanish Mackerel Line Fishery for years. Which is it?

Some points to consider.

* The East QLD coastline is over 2000km long and is very sparsely populated, (ie Cooktown to Cape York has over 300 nautical miles of unpopulated coastline) The average Fisherman has an average <25 Nautical Mile range from town and city populations, thus the Qld Coast overall is not heavily fished due to remoteness.
* The GBRMNP (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park) is 344,000 km2 with 33% (113520 Km2) already protected (Green “No Fishing” Zones).
* The Fisheries QLD Quota limit of 600 tons are set for professional fishermen. This sector has been only taking 270 to 300 tons for the last several years due to demand only. Spanish Mackeral are a domestic market fish supplying all of QLD fish and chip stores and Cafes. It feeds a great deal of voters.
* There are 180 East Coast Spanish Mackerel Professional Fishing licenses. Of these 180 licenses only approximately 30 actually fish, so that is approximately only 1 boat per 70 kms of coastline if and only if all the boats fished at the same time which they do not.
* Recreational fishermen are limited to 3 fish per person and 6 fish per boat. Estimated catch is 170 tons per year.
* Combined catch of recreational fishermen and Professional fishermen is between 440 and 470 ton which is well below the Spanish Mackerel Quota of 600 ton set by Fisheries QLD. In 2004.
* Due to weather and seasonality (South East Trade Winds) 60-70% of the time the North Qld Coast cannot be fished by the average fisherman due to rough conditions.
* The QLD East Coast Spanish Mackerel are a transient migratory pelagic species travelling every season up from NSW, thus they are very hard to accurately quantify. They are also found from the coastline to the shelf, Surface to deep also adding to the difficulty of quantifying.
* The Spanish Mackerel Line Fishery has been deemed sustainable for several years by Fisheries QLD’s own sustainability report issues every 2 years.
* Spanish Mackerel are a fast growing fish reaching 40cm in one year. By 2 years they are 80cm are reproductive.
* Spanish Mackerel are a line caught fish. “NO NETS = NO BYCATCH”. Hence only a Portionare caught from an area.
* Fishing reports along the East Coast NSW and QLD indicate they are in good numbers.

With all the above mentioned restrictions, regulations, limits to accurately survey Spanish Mackerel and current regulations and protection measures,

**THE NUMBERS JUST DON’T ADD UP TO THE NEW “BIOMASS ESTIMATE MODEL”** which says the fishery is in a dire position.

By supporting Fisheries QLD’s New “Biomass Estimate Model” and potential fishing closures, **YOU** are supporting

* Locking out local Qld recreational fisherman (and potentially NSW recreational fisherman as it is a shared fishery) from catching Spanish Mackerel to feed their family.
* Loss of local jobs for Professional fishermen, distributors, processors and generational businesses.
* Loss of tourism income for Fishing Charter Operators at the worst possible time with Covid.
* Substitution of a Queenslander’s favorite fish and chips and table fish for a LESS SUSTAINABLE species, IMPORTED Spanish Mackerel or other LESS REGULATED Imported species to fill this void.
* A New “Biomass Estimate Model” that can be applied to locking Professional and Recreational fishermen out of other fisheries in the future.
* Substitution of a line caught sustainable fish with extremely low bycatch or seafloor damage and virtually zero human footprint, with a less sustainable, less regulated inferior Imported or Pond farmed fish.
* Taking away a person’s rights to fish for Spanish Mackerel.

Spanish Mackerel are a Queensland identity and way of life for many, so I ask you to….

Stop trying to court green voters at the next election and apply pressure to reverse this proposal immediately.

Tell Fisheries QLD managers and working groups to re assess their models and data collecting methods, and look at the damage they are doing, both economically and mentally to local communities.

Support local Australian jobs and the local seafood industry.

We are an Island Nation with the some of the best seafood on earth and every Australian deserves access to it, whether self-caught or provided by a professional fisherman.

80% of Australians eat seafood. Personally, I refuse to eat Imported or unsustainable seafood. I would like to be able to keep making that choice.

I kindly expect a reply to my correspondence within 2 weeks.

Kind regards,

[Insert your name and sign above]

(Insert your return mailing address for the reply)