

Dean Cox

SCANNED

From: "Anna & Bob Honaker" <annab22@cox.net>
To: "Dean Cox" <deancox@mchsi.com>
Sent: Sunday, June 17, 2012 6:29 PM
Subject: Bob's Letter
TO: Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

FROM: Bob Honaker
Owner of F/V Evening Star

Dear Council:

I wanted to address the council in person but due to a back injury I could not attend.

I have been in the commercial fishing business for 22 years. I have seen the fisheries go from bad to fair to good. The last 4 years have been the most profitable for me. Last year was my all time best. Over all, I think the council has done a pretty fair job. I haven't agreed with all of your decisions but I have worked by business the best way I could to stay afloat.

My main concern at this time, is the Vermillion Snapper. I saw what catch shares did for the Red Snapper program and am strongly in favor of a like program for Vermillion Snappers.

As I stated above, last year was my best. This year is going to be the worst year in my last 15 years of fishing. Why? I feel there are 2 reasons.

1. **Over fishing.** There are many new fisherman targeting this fish. There are charter boats fishing this fish. Mainly, because they can't make it chartering with the closure of so many fisheries. They have to do something to survive. I don't hold this against them but I do hold the failure of the council to see that the Red Snapper fishery is strong and should be open longer. This would relieve the pressure on the Vermillion Snapper. **CATCH SHARES** would greatly help out over fishing of the Vermillion Snapper. We need to limit the number of fisherman.
2. **Oil Spill Problem.** I strongly feel the oil spill also had a lot to do with the poor Vermillion Snapper season we had this year. Last year, my boat was bringing in any where from 3000 to 8500 pounds per trip. So far this year, my largest Vermillion Snapper catch was 2300 pounds. **BIG** difference. We haven't seen the last of the damage this oil spill has caused.

If the council doesn't take action on the Vermillion Snapper fishery soon, this fishery will be one of the worst ones we will have.

Thank you for listening to my 2 cents on this problem.

Yours respectively,

Bob Honaker

6/17/2012