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GULF FISHERIES COUNCIL



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BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

ROBERT J. BARHAM
SECRETARY

September 25, 2014

Kevin Anson
2203 North Lois Avenue
Suite 1100
Tampa, Florida 33607

RE: Sector Separation for the Recreational Red Snapper Fishery (Reef Fish Amendment 40)

Dear Chairman Anson:

We are writing to express our concern that the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is considering a knee jerk reaction to a fishery management issue by separating the recreational fishery into two sectors. This action only serves to further divide our anglers and perpetuate animosity within the for-hire fishery and between the for-hire and private angler fisheries. Please consider that this action will cause increased user conflicts both on the water and on the dock when anglers see red snapper being harvested and landed that they can't legally retain. Right or wrong the conflicts will happen as a direct result of this action.

At very least the Council should consider development of a complete plan for sector separation so the for-hire fishery can make an intelligent decision on what this action will really mean and how it will impact them. We believe the council is putting the cart before the horse if action is taken to only separate the sectors and not provide a detailed plan. If there is no vision for further development of a sector separation plan then this action does nothing to resolve existing problems in the fishery and only serves to privatize a public resource. This action in and of itself doesn't help to spread out the fishing season nor does it provide stability for our local fishing communities. This action continues to promote derby fishing and does little to assist our full-time federally permitted for-hire captains to make a living from fishing.

Council members should consider the long term implications of this action. Where does separation end? Will this provide the precedent for never ending request for sector separation in other fisheries or for other species of fish? Each requiring the council takes consistent action to allocate that resource between sectors. This action leads to increased conflict within the fishing industry. We should be considering fishery management measures that keep our anglers working together to improve this

nation's fishery resources and working together to better manage all sectors of the fishery to benefit all anglers and not a select few.

We ask that the Council consider putting sector separation on the back burner and revisit a regional management approach. As Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal expressed in a letter to Congressional leadership signed by three other Gulf state governors last year:

“State-based fishery management has proven to be far more effective, and has engineered some of the greatest marine conservation victories in the country, including red drum, speckled trout, snook and striped bass. It is in the national interest to implement procedures and measures to provide for effective inter-jurisdictional Gulf coastal state conservation and management of this species.

After more than three decades under federal management, the red snapper fishery remains mired in confusion and turmoil. We are determined to find a constructive path to resolve this unsatisfactory situation, and seek your support of legislation to allow the states to take greater responsibilities in the management of fishery resources.”

Regional management could provide each state's federally permitted for-hire sector with a share of the red snapper resource while providing them with more harvest flexibility. The days of one shoe fits all in fishery management is over. We request that the Council focus on the entire recreational fishery and work together with the states to find cooperative solutions such as regional management for this fishery.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Barham
Secretary
LA Dept of Wildlife and Fisheries



Pat Manuel
Commissioner
LA Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Cc: Doug Gregory, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council