

Gulf Council and constituents,

Thank you for your time in reading this and allowing me to voice some of my concerns and opinions pertaining to current and future fisheries management, as well as informally introduce myself.

My name is Dean Cox, owner of Cox Fisheries inc. which consists of two commercial fishing vessels that are involved in the gulf reef fish fishery. My business is based out of Destin Fl. I was professionally fishing on commercial or charter boats since 1986. Prior to fishing professionally, I would spend boyhood summers working on my grandfathers charter boat as he as well was a commercial and or charter fisherman most of his life. NMFS catch records will verify that I've been a captain on various boats from 1993 to present day.

I represent F.F.F.F. which is an abbreviation for, Fishermen For Fishing Future; a self proclaimed organization not yet formed, consisting only of myself at this time. I chose this as the name because many combinations of F.F.F.F . will have the same meaning. In lieu of this , I would not be opposed to joining the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance (as a voting member,) if monies allowed. I feel they best represent most of my opinions , of fisheries issues and are on a great path to ensuring Gulf reef fish, fishing remains a viable, equitable, sustainable industry.

As a captain, my mainstay in the reef fish fishery has historically been Vermillion Snapper. As a matter of fact, out of necessity, I was one of the innovators of harvesting Vermillions with greater technical, efficiency than known in years prior. I was also an integral part in designing ,testing ,and modifying the fishing gear that is used today to target Vermillion's .

I think most Vermillion Snapper fishermen would agree that the Vermillion fishery in the Gulf is, volatile as compared to other reef fishes. Through much time & study, My expertise and experience tell me that Vermillions tend to be temperamental and more finicky than other reef fish. They are also smaller compared to other reef fish and in most cases tend to add up at a slower rate when fishing for them. I also feel more variables affect them than any other reef fish I've tried to target. A number of insights should support my beliefs in this matter, and I encourage others to engage me as to why I feel this way.

Now for my conundrum... I've been a captain in the reef fish industry for 18 years, yet I am having increasing difficulty earning a living, perhaps to the extent of bankruptcy. I understand that that