

Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council
Policy on External Comment/Analysis of NMFS Stock Assessments Prepared for the Council

In the event that any association or organization has a scientist or scientific group comment on or analyze a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) stock assessment for which the Council may use as a basis for setting total allowable catch (TAC) (and associated management measures) and the association or organization would like the Council's management committee to review their analysis and comments when they review the NMFS stock assessment and the stock assessment panel (SAP) report; that association or organization must provide their analysis to the Council at least 14 days prior to the SAP meeting. If for any reason that is not possible, the association or organization should immediately advise the Council Executive Director, who will confer with the Council Chairman on whether to accept the analysis or delay acceptance to a later date when such reviews by the SAP and subsequently the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) are possible. This policy in no way is intended to constrain any person testifying before the Council from presenting information on NMFS stock assessments either by written testimony or oral testimony under the time constraints of such testimony. This policy is conditional upon the NMFS stock assessments being available **six weeks** in advance of the SAP meeting, and thereby available to the association or organization for review and comment.