



Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Managing Fishery Resources in the U.S. Federal Waters of the Gulf of Mexico

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June 27, 2016

Sunny Snider Centrella, Ph.D.
NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Fisheries Science Center
75 Virginia Beach Dr.
Miami, Florida 33149

Dear Dr. Snider Centrella:

Thank you for providing the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) the opportunity to review the Draft Regional Climate Science Strategy Action Plan (Plan). Both the draft plan and the presentation given at our June meeting were informative. The Council was very receptive to the initial effort by NMFS on the Plan. We are pleased to provide the comments on this important effort, in the body of this letter and track change suggestions on the enclosed Draft Plan.

We strongly support the need to increase the application of climate related information in our stock assessments and subsequent management efforts. The overarching objective to develop climate-informed reference points is a laudable goal and we recognize it will be a challenge to obtain, analyze, and incorporate the pertinent climate-related data into ecosystem models to provide reliable reference points that go beyond our current state of the art. We feel by continuing to establish a baseline of climate-related data all efforts in the future will be easier to conduct. We do, however, have some concern about the strategic planning effort requiring more agency resources than seem to be available. Therefore, we support partnerships and feel these will indeed be an ongoing and important component of this effort.

We appreciate having available the 2013 *Ecosystem Status Report for the Gulf of Mexico* as it provides a good baseline for future efforts. We realize NMFS and other partners have a difficult challenge ahead and we welcome the opportunity to consider adaptive management processes based on expanded assessments incorporating climate related management strategy evaluations and other vulnerability assessments.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft regional climate strategy.

Sincerely,

Kevin Anson
Gulf Council Chair

cc: Gulf Council
Bonnie Ponwith, Ph.D.
Gulf Council Staff