

**Public Hearing Summary
Reef Fish Amendment 45
Sector Separation Sunset Provision**

**Saint Petersburg, Florida
May 23, 2016**

Council/Staff

Roy Williams
Emily Muehlstein
Bernadine Roy

23 members of public attended.

Steve Furman – Coastal Conservation Association

He supports Alternative 1, no action; let the sunset expire. It is disappointing that we're here discussing this again since the Council made a decision already. Let the states manage recreational fisherman. Allow the Council to manage the federal for-hire and commercial fishermen. Allocation must be wrong because private anglers don't get a chance to fish long enough. Shift allocation so that everyone gets the same number of days to fish. If you look at the states, there are more fishermen and more charter fishermen every day but the fishery is great. The state is doing something right that the federal government can't figure out.

Bob Bryant - Private angler

We've continuously faced this issue since 2008 when it first came up. The overwhelming opinion about sector separation is still negative and people's negative opinions are hardening as time goes on. Tremendous pressure was put on the Council to pass Amendment 40 and the sunset was put in place for the sole purpose of making it pass. There was a conflict of interest by two Council members who would benefit directly from the vote. For Amendment 40, 2206 comments were received online; 92% were against and 8% were in support of sector separation. For Amendment 45, to date there are 173 online comments and 99% are against and 1% is in favor of sector separation. There is no justification for extending this failed experiment. No accountability measures have been vetted or put in place and there is no enhanced data collection. No information on if the charter for-hire has stayed within their allocation. Sector separation has no benefit to the fishery at all. Historically, the charter for-hire sector has hammered red snapper harder than other fishermen have and conservation measures should lessen their impact. If private anglers want to go red snapper fishing, they can hire a state vessels and fish within those seasons. Sector separation has caused chaos, hatred, and distrust, and the chasm between fishermen has expanded. Some charter anglers are offering dude trips. We have turned our fishery into a crony system and those who pay can play while all others must wait for the Council to do something. What we've done is unreasonable; 22% of anglers have 40% of the fish. The remaining 78% sit idly by begging for scraps from preferred groups. All the stock assessments show this fishery was rebuilding under less

restrictive seasons. The fishery isn't the problem, the Council and the management process are the real problems.

Eric Mahoney- Charter

He supports Alternative 3; Eliminate the sunset on Amendment 40. Sector separation was the right move and it is working well for the for-hire fleet. It was the first step for positive change in the for-hire sector. Florida didn't support sector separation but since it's been in place, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission voted to extend the sunset and is finally recognizing the benefits. Amendment 40 is working, letting it sunset would not be in the best interest of the Council, the management process, or the industry. As a result of sector separation, pilot programs are being put in place that will benefit the future of the fishery. The Council needs to convene a private recreational advisory panel to pursue a management program for that sector that increases access. Move forward with Amendments 41 and 42.

Bill Tucker – Commercial fisherman

He supports Alternative 3; Eliminate the sunset provision. Sector separation was put in place because the charter for-hire component was not able to expand, and the proportion of recreational catch harvested by charter vessels was eroded over the years. Sector Separation protects charter boats and the people that access the fishery on those boats. Amendment 40 is a success story and the people that don't have their own boats have 46 days with sector separation while private anglers have extra days of access in state seasons. It has been essential for the charter sector to have their own allocation and they're working on ways to share the fish for people who don't have their own boats. Let's give the charter industry a future, it's unacceptable to just extend sector separation, it should be made permanent so the operators know they have a future in this fishery

Dennis O'Hern- Fishing Rights Alliance

Under sector separation, the boat owners get the charter for-hire quota, not the anglers on the charter boats. Statistically, 50% of all snapper grouper trips in the entire Gulf used to leave from this three county area in central Florida. I don't know how good you have to be to catch red snapper in the state waters from here; we do not have access to the fishery. No one asked him if he wanted to give up his federal days to have a state season. No one asked the anglers who choose to fish on the charter for-hire boats. His boat is a lot less valuable now because of the regulations and he sees the writing on the wall. If fishermen are engaged in business they're not considered anglers, they're professional. The three-year sunset was used as an incentive to get Council members to buy-in to sector separation. The attorney warned that the decision could be reversed at any time and the sunset is the only reason the vote went forward. Why is the elimination of the sunset provision being turned into a separate amendment? These hijinks foster distrust. He never consented to giving his fishing rights to any business or person. He is tired of the Council stacking advisory panels with pro sector separation and individual fishing quota program advocates. Panel member selection occurs behind closed doors and there is no accountability for those decisions. Neither the Gulf Seafood Institute nor the Charter Fisherman's Association represent his interests and never have. 97% of anglers wouldn't find sector separation acceptable. It is a privatization of a public resource. The National

Academy of Science recommends that NMFS register anglers and survey them. There was over a 20% increase in charter for-hire trips for the years 2008 and 2009 however, over the same time period, there was a 20% decrease in private angler tips.

Sean Gucken – Coastal Conservation Association and Fishing Rights Alliance.

According to folks that have been around longer than him, in the 70's, all you needed was a stamp and permit to sell redfish, but now there is an endorsement for every fish in the ocean. With sector separation, red snapper is the flagship species. Next it will be gag and then amberjack and mangrove snapper. It seems like the Council and NMFS has not figured out how to reliably and accurately determine private boat anglers catch. It seems like they're trying to push private anglers out of business. Sector separation was sold with the sunset provision to get it through, and now were asking for more. When it was put though, didn't anyone look at how long it would take to put management measures in place? The sunset was put in place to appease a few voting members, and now we're stuck with death by a thousand paper cuts. Once you make money from fish, you should be considered a commercial fisherman. The charter for-hire fishermen should be shifted to the commercial sector. The fish don't belong to the anglers on the boats, they belong to the boat owners. The extension of sector separation is going to pass, he has no faith in the process.

Mike Colby – Charter and headboat

He is in favor of Alternative 3 to end the sunset. Sector separation is pragmatic. Think about all the arguments we've heard for six years prior to today, and the rationale for how allocations came into being. New management alternatives are now on the front burner in Amendments 41 and 42. The for-hire fishermen finally got what they were looking for. The real rationale behind sector separation for red snapper was to build a management platform; that is what the federally permitted fleet is doing and there is no reason to stop it. Fairness is a personal opinion, the Council did their due diligence and the charter for-hire industry wanted this. The problem with the recreational anglers is that they don't have a champion. There is no one who will come up to the Council post Amendment 40 and say "we have separate allocations and we need to develop a management plan for our anglers." He hasn't seen a different management plan pitched for private anglers. Simply saying; "lets wind the clock back five years," isn't productive. We need to move forward and develop management programs for everyone.

Jim Suomi – Coastal Conservation Association

The Gulf Council has successfully driven a wedge between recreational anglers and charter fishermen. They use to oppose commercial fishermen together, but now they're battling amongst themselves. Quite honestly, charter for-hire fishermen are commercial interest and harvest should come out of the commercial quota. If he told you that you could drive Friday and Saturday but Sunday and Monday you have to hire at taxi, people would be up in arms. Sector separation does just that. No one should have guarantees for being in business. He supports Alternative 1.

Craig Berman – Fishing Rights Alliance

The people for whom the Council are passing are economic stakeholders. According to the law you cannot allocate between private anglers and for-hire reef permit holders, you have to treat all anglers the same. If the management measures you create involve fish tags, give them to the public and let them decide if they want to go on a party boat, charter boat, or private boat. It's much cheaper to go on a friend's boat. The Council went off the rails and forgot about fair and equitable and skipped data from the headboat cooperative. The Council didn't go back and use data from 1986 for gag and red grouper, only for red snapper because back then, very few people owned their own boats, and today over 50% of the angling public owns their own boat. That is why there was a moratorium on reef permits. Private anglers don't owe charter fisherman anything for that., that was a conservation measure. There is still a lawsuit pending, and the briefing is almost complete. The sunset was put in place to allow for regional management. What happened to Amendment 39? Where are the flexible options for the private anglers? What plan do you have for 2032 when the stock is rebuilt? As permit numbers decline charter access will increase. The government isn't responsible for the stock rebound, it's the decline of the shrimping industry. The message you are sending is sorry, the fish are bigger and season is shorter. Somehow stock assessments can't capture that the stock is increasing in biomass. All the for-hire fishermen need is 18 days but, NMFS gave them 44 days; you can't explain that. If people want to catch red snapper they'll find state waters that are open. The charter customers can go to the panhandle to catch red snapper. The charter fishermen are giving you respect now because their pockets are lined. When will we see flexible management for private anglers? There is an appeal on sector separation in the 5th circuit court of appeals of Louisiana. What's your plan if Amendment 40 is reversed by the courts? You may get a notice that the Council violated the law, and a contingency plan should be in place for that event. Everything the council is doing is wrong. People cannot afford to go on a charter, it's not realistic. The Council is not considering the family anglers.

Brad Gorst – Charter

He supports Alternative 3. We've given it three years and now, kick it in the teeth and say it isn't working. There hasn't been enough time to determine if it's working or not. The private component of the fishery keeps growing, in the past, the for-hire component harvested 60% at one point but now have they only have 42%. The charter industry took it on the chin by giving away some of their historical catch to allow for separate management. The private sector keeps growing, but the maximum number for for-hire customers is stagnant. He is representing "Joe the plumber who lives in Kansas", and the sunset needs to go away. People in south Florida, who are complaining that they get 9 days, should be mad at the state of Florida for giving the snapper to the panhandle with a 70 day season, or Texas for their year-round access. There needs to be enough time for Amendments 41 and 42 to be developed.

Chad Haggert – Headboat operator

He supports Alternative 3 – Remove the sunset. We are moving forward with plans that will help the fleet his vessels. The people in the headboat cooperative are harvesting fewer fish than they would have in a 44-day season, but members are able to choose

when to harvest them. He is here speaking for his customers; if these meetings were held in the home states of his customers (Midwest), there would be a different opinion heard. The charter for-hire fleet is set where it is at and it can't grow. Private anglers don't want to change rules because if they keep going, the charter fleet will be pushed out entirely. For-hire operators are painted as money hungry people, but he wonders what will happen to the people on his boats when the private fleet grows too big and there is no room for the charter for hire industry. Someone in Minnesota might feel differently. The headboat pilot program was a success. He got to pick his days for fish and he caught fewer fish. He agrees that the private anglers need to find a better management program. We have a template from the pilot program for headboats and he doesn't want the Council to yank the rug out when they're making progress.

Craig Cavanaugh – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. When you look at using a sunset, it's usually because you can't get enough votes for something that is permanent. When the sunset occurs, sector separation ends and that is how it should be. Pass the buck, let it expire and it won't come again. All of this is crony capitalism and we see it in a lot of agencies. The general public is losing faith in federal agencies. If the Internal Revenue Service called you today, would you believe that you would be treated fairly and impartially? Same thing is happening here, the public is losing faith that they're not being listened to by representatives at any level. The agency is using its regulatory authority to divide profits in the industry to benefit a minority group. People weren't sure it was a good idea to begin with, and since it's not, sector separation should end.

Dave Mott – Coastal Conservation Association

He has a boat and also goes with charter vessels. There is value in headboats because you can go fishing with big groups of people and there is also value in going with a captain because they can teach you things. There is also value in going with family. A two fish bag limit doesn't make sense. In Florida, you can't catch red snapper in state waters. The Council should leave the sunset in place to allow for data collection and figure out what comes out of this sector separation trial. The voters and the public should be given more days to catch the fish. Let them have fun and come home with a few fish so they don't have to force fishing into such a short time period. Voters should have more time to fish so they can actually have the opportunity to fish. There is cronyism at the Council and it is crooked that dozens of people get the lion's share of the harvest.

Paul Kerr – Private angler

He is not knowledgeable in the numbers. He supports Bob Bryant's opinions. The charter captains have ignored the fact that they're just greedy crooks. The Council is corrupt, and this is not the way this county should be run. The capitalist free market shouldn't let us dictate who succeeds in business and who fails. Several inshore guides who are very serious fishermen, make a good living, and it's hard to get on their boats because they're booked. That is what free market is about. He supports Alternative 1.

Suzanne Foster – Charter

She has been fishing since the early 70's when you use to see snapper. If you went way off-shore after the 80's, there were hardly any fish, and her red snapper harvest was down to nothing. She resents being accused of hammering the fish and being called a crook. She represents 1000's of people that don't have boats. She doesn't even remember the last time she had red snapper. The private anglers have legitimate complaints, but the Gulf Council should be respected because they're educated. The fishermen have experiences that should be respected. She would like to support Alternative 3. We can all eventually work it so everyone gets what they want, which is fish. She has to work and make money.

Max Foster – Charter

He has been fishing since 1950. There used to be a lot of fish and fishermen didn't have all the fancy gear we have now like GPS and bottom machines. Red snapper used to sell for \$.025 a pound. That's something that no one is saying. The private anglers are allowed to catch two red snapper, grouper, amberjack and a lot more fish. You're not running six miles to catch two fish, you're going to harvest multiple species. It's mindboggling that we're having all these problems. There are millions more private fishermen than there were when he was young. Now everyone is a navigator. You can go to the same spot 100 miles out over and over; there is no guess work to fishing anymore.

Brent Kempton – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. He has been diving for 9 years pretty consistently and gets to the deep water seldom. This year off the local coast, the water was cold and he saw more red snapper than he has ever seen in the past seven years. He has seen schools of 150 fish at a time, all around 8 pounds. In 100 feet of water he sees little fish and fish all the way up to 22 pounds. The data is wrong; the stock is healthy. Something isn't right, we see all the hogfish, grouper and amberjack and the numbers that National Marine Fisheries uses don't make sense. The fish are out there. You can't get a bait to the bottom.

Biloxi, Mississippi
May 23, 2016

Council/Staff

Dale Diaz
Kelly Lucas
Assane Diagne
Charlotte Schiaffo

47 members of the public attended

Clarence Seymour - Charter

He represents 15 other federal reef fish for-hire permit holders. He read a list of names and area codes of charter customers who are non-boat owning Americans that support sector separation and need access to the fishery. Amendment 40 - Sector Separation needs to be retained because there is too much non-compliance by recreational anglers. For Amendment 45, he supports Alternative 3.

F.J. Eicke - Private angler and Coastal Conservation Association member

He is opposed to Amendment 40 - Sector Separation and feels that it came about too fast. According to the Magnuson-Stevens Act there are only two sectors and sector separation is a misnomer. Amendment 45 should not change sunset provision. The program needs to be evaluated and taking away the sunset would disallow that evaluation period. The sunset is in place for a reason and needs to be enforced. Amendment 40 would not have passed without the sunset so, the sunset should remain. Sector separation does not help the recreational sector. He supports Alternative 1, no action.

Gary Bryant - Charter

He supports Alternative 3. Charter boats became a separate sector when the moratorium was established and really that is when sector separation should have occurred. 57% of the fish now belong to people who own their own boats. This is a public resource that belongs to all Americans and we must preserve historical access for those non-boat owning members of the public. There is no moratorium for private recreational anglers and the 9-day season is tragic but, the for hire industry just harvests their fish slower. Red Snapper is a public resource that should be accessed by all, including non-boat owners.

Tom Steber – Charter and charter for-hire Headboat Advisory Panel

The headboat cooperative won awards for developing a program that works so well and now the Council is dragging their feet to make the system permanent. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Everyone needs to be accountable. Texas doesn't have to abide by the rules that the rest of the Gulf does and it's frustrating.

Mike Foto - Charter

He would like to do away with the sunset and he supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. He takes non-boating public from other parts of the country fishing. Red snapper is a public resource and he doesn't understand why private anglers

are against seasons for those people without boats. Long state seasons are detrimental to charter boats. Charter vessels take non-boat owning public fishing

Jay Trochesset - Charter

He has been in the business for 46 years. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. He thinks of himself as a taxi service for people who like to fish but don't own boats. The state of Mississippi has a season that is twice as long as his federal season and private anglers are happy with that.

Dustin Trochesset - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Long state seasons are detrimental to charter boats. He noted that many of his clients are people who can't afford a boat and who would not have an opportunity to fish without charter vessels. The Magnuson-Stevens Act calls for fair and equitable allocation of the resource. In the states there are 700+ days to fish in the Gulf, and this is especially advantageous with the new 9-mile limit.

Ron Harmon - Charter

Council should stay with sector separation. He supports Alternative 3. Before sector separation there was no mechanism for accountability and charter operators want to take care of the fish stocks. Private anglers have plenty of fishing days in state waters.

Frank Becker - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. He has customers that come from all over the United States and without charter access they wouldn't have access to the fishery.

Kenny Bellais - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

**Panama City, Florida
May 24, 2016**

Council/Staff

Pam Dana
Assane Diagne
Charlotte Schiaffo

36 members of the public attended

Anita Ross - Charter

She supports sector separation and is in favor of a 3 or 5-year extension. Seems to be working for us.

Steve Ross - Charter

He supports a 3-year extension (Preferred Alternative 2a). For 3 or 5-year extension.

Billy Archer - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Bob Zales II - Charter

Does not care one way or the other when it comes to sector separation. Sector separation has divided the recreational community, not just in private rec and charters, but it has divided the charter community. He is opposed to IFQ programs for charter & headboats. Most Charter boats are happy with 46 days. IFQs will not give 46 days.

Charles Guilford - Charter

He is neutral on sector separation. Last year, he was able to make money for the first time in years. He is opposed to IFQs. IFQs profit only a few people but put others out of business.

Benjamin Kelly - Charter

He supports a 3-year extension (Preferred Alternative 2a). He is against IFQs and catch shares.

Mike Sullivan - Charter

He supports Alternative 2. He opposes catch shares and IFQ programs.

Stewart Miller - Charter

He supports a 3-year extension (Preferred Alternative 2a). Opposes catch shares and IFQs.

Buddy Cooper - Private Angler

With sector separation, the Council is trying to fix a problem that is not there. Anglers need more than 9 days to fish in federal waters, the Council needs to do whatever needs to be done to give anglers more days.

Mark Kelly - Charter

He supports sector separation but he is not happy with 46 days, just living with it. He supports a 3-year extension (Preferred Alternative 2a). Opposes inter-sector trading.

Pam Anderson

Amendment pits sectors against each other. Stop sector separation now and maintain the sunset provision (Alternative 1).

Dean Cox - Charter

He is for sector separation and supports either Alternative 3 or any of the options in Alternative 2.

Mike Eller - Charter

He is for sector separation and supports either Alternative 3 or Alternative 2c. He supports electronic logbooks. Against catch shares.

Henry Hunt - Charter

He is for sector separation; supports Alternative 2a. Believes we need at least three more years to see how this is going.

Kathy Eller - Charter

She supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

John Anderson - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

John Law - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Opposes catch shares and IFQs.

Kyle Lowe - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

B.J. Berkett - Charter

He supports a 3-year extension (Preferred Alternative 2a). Opposes catch shares and IFQs.

Scott Robson – Charter and Member of the Reef Fish Advisory Panel

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Management plans take a long time to develop, 3 years (Alternative 2a) is not enough time. Not for IFQs.

Gary Jarvis - Charter

He supports the removal of the sunset provision; he is in favor of Alternative 3. State rules take fish away from the for-hire CB industry. The majority of the public does not own vessels. Alternative 3 allows to provide stable access to anglers who do not own boats.

Chris Schofield - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Harold Staples - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Scott Atkisson - Charter

He is against sector separation; supports Alternative 1. Most people did not want inter-sector trading, why did Council make no motions reflecting this wish?

**League City
May 25, 2016**

Council/Staff

Doug Boyd
Emily Muehlstein
Karen Hoak

68 members of the public attended.

William Barr – Charter

Working with flawed data landing information is a problem and it leads to more problems. He got into the permits for about \$7,000, and recently people have been calling to offer him nearly twice that; this indicates there is a problem. The general public is being left out of management. He is against the shorter season for the private recreational anglers and he is against sector separation. Dump the alternates and fix the flawed data.

Ted Venker- Coastal Conservation Association Conservation Director

CCA has 90,000 members across the Gulf Coast. He recommends the Council adopt the no action Alternative 1, and stick to the original deal with the sunset provision. Sector separation is controversial and it only makes sense for the sunset to remain as originally agreed upon so managers can analyze the effects of the unprecedented management regime. Phase out sector separation if it fails to meet objectives or if it produces unwanted consequences. As time goes on the charter for-hire industry will realize the implications of the sector separation and that it inevitably leads to a catch share system, more problems will come to light. The Council was concerned about social and economic impacts of this program and wanted to make sure there was an evaluation period. Elimination of the sunset before any evaluation has taken place would violate the spirit of the program. The economic study of the headboat pilot has not been concluded. This shows it takes a substantial amount of time to fully evaluate a program. Amendment 39 – Regional Management is not moving forward, but there is still time for the states to move forward with it or provide another amendment to transfer control to the states.

Joe Gilleland- Private angler

Grew up in Freeport fishing offshore for 25 years and guided for eight. Snapper management is the worst mess he has seen. People have no time to fish. It's windy in early June with winds regularly at 20 mph during the season. He would like sector separation to sunset next year, and he supports Alternative 1. Hopefully the states will take over the snapper fishery because they do a great job managing the fishery.

Warren Clark- Private angler

The Council should honor the commitment to sunset sector separation and provide time to evaluate and achieve the best management of the fishery. He supports Alternative 1. Any rush to prematurely lock in sector separation can only be driven by a few, to lock in financial benefits for a few. Him and friends can go out 45 miles to catch red snapper on his boat, it costs less than \$200 for supplies, but he can only fish 9 days. If he charters a boat and pays \$2200, he can catch the same fish at the same spot for 46 days. No wonder

charter operators want to skip the evaluation of the program; it's all about the money. The Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) isn't to provide means for anyone's personal financial gain. Section 98.623 of Magnuson-Stevens Act states: "Conservation and management measures shall not discriminate among residences. If it becomes necessary to allocate fishery resources among U.S. residents such allocation should be fair and equitable to all such fishermen and be carried out in such a manner that no one gets an excessive share." If sector separation were to continue, it violates MSA. The Council should honor their commitment to evaluate the provision with facts in hand rather than allow a privileged few to override the process to fill their pockets.

Tom Hilton- Private angler

The Council passed Amendment 40 despite the overwhelming opposition of most of the stakeholders in the Gulf. It passed because of the addition of the sunset provision and here we are, just 1 year later, looking to revoke that provision. It illustrates that the Council process is a dog and pony show and the Council is going to do what they want no matter what the public says. There is a lawsuit pending and it's premature to take any action on Amendment 40 and the sunset before the lawsuits are complete. The idea of separating sectors is segregation, so the Council is discriminating against a segment of the fishery based on the arbitrary parameter of the type of boat they fish on. The nine and 46 day seasons are the result of this segregation and discrimination. Our own government is condoning segregation and moving forward with privatization of the fishery. He supports Alternative 1.

Johnny Williams- Headboat operator

He supports Alternative 3. Let's do away with the sunset completely. He believes that CCA is disingenuous when they stand up and say things aren't equitable. There is a simple solution, if we close state waters, private anglers can have 46 days out in federal waters too. As is, private anglers get to fish state waters while charter fishermen don't. He feels that if CCA and their membership would contact state directors to close state waters, than everyone would have a long season. It's not fair that he can't fish state water seasons and that Captain and crew can't keep red snapper. There are many things that already separate the two types of fishermen.

Scott Hickman- Commercial fisherman

He supports Alternative 3. When Amendment 40 started the for-hire sector reached out to Coastal Conservation Association and asked them to sit and talk about solutions for the charter boats. No one from the recreational side would sit and talk with him. There is an awful situation with state waters and if he was a recreational fisherman he would be angry. South Texas has a great state water fishery, but the north coast of Texas does not, and it's forcing people to poach. Under sector separation the charter boats were 37% under their annual catch limit. They're more accountable, they've developed electronic logbooks and many have vessel monitoring systems on their boats to give the Council better data. The Council has tried to come up with a plan to help recreational anglers but nothing has happened. CCA isn't supporting them, and there are no proposals to solve the problems with the recreational fishery. All he sees is attacks on the industry that is trying to fix things. The charter boat industry will help if the recreational industry wants solutions.

Bubba Cochran- Commercial and charter
Alternative 3 is the best choice.

Dan Green- Charter

He supports Alternative 3 and would support Alternative 2. That's the only option. The charter industry needs more time to build results to show the Gulf Council.

Marc Wilkerson- Charter

Remove the sunset provision. The sunset decreases economic certainty for business. It allows each group to develop a management system that would work for them. The groups are different and need different management approaches. Each state has created their own seasons in state waters. Sector separation levels the playing field.

Hans Guindon- Commercial fisherman

Supports getting rid of the sunset. Move forward with sector separation by selecting Alternative 3.

Tony Bess- Private angler

Supports Alternative 1. He has been fishing since 1976 as a private recreational angler. As per the CCA newsletter, privatization has created a class of commercial sea lords and 55 commercial operators own more than 70% of the commercial harvest. This has also lead to "catch share experience" trips where charter operators lease fish from commercial harvesters and sell them to recreational anglers. . This has created convoluted management measures that haven't been used in the management of any other wildlife; not ducks or bass. The ability for recreational anglers to participate has been eliminated. June is the windiest month. Across the country so few recreational anglers show up because they feel that their opinions are totally ignored and the sea lords and for-hire anglers get the advantage because they've bought and paid for it. When he asked the Council about the short recreational season the response he received was apathetic and he was told the information used to determine the season came from 2006. Why aren't Council members demanding better data? Snapper are everywhere and he understands the harvest is based on weight but it should be on numbers. The states have shown that they can regulate and manage the fishery.

Charles Everts- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. Years ago, at a meeting at the University of Houston, Dr. Roy Crabtree came, and they had a discussion on recreational issues. Roy thought that private anglers voted for something and he discovered it was a charter guy voting on behalf of the private anglers. The charter for-hire members on the Council voted to line their own pockets, and they don't represent private anglers. Recreational anglers work for a living and know the meetings are a dog and pony show so they don't show up. The Council members are so skewed towards commercial interest to put money into their pockets.

Todd Coleman- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. It is too windy in June and nine days is ridiculous. The charter guys would fish out all the snapper if they fished in state seasons.

Joey Lenderman- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. The Council needs to get better numbers. We can go to the moon but can't figure out how many fish are in the Gulf. Commercial guys can catch thousands of fish in a few days but recreational anglers cannot have 2 fish for more than 9 days? The scientists need to figure it out.

Mark Scarborough- Private angler

The Council should allow sector separation to expire so the program can be evaluated before moving forward. He supports Alternative 1.

Shane Cantrell- Charter

The nine-day season is not the truth. In 365 days in Texas, he does some commercial fishing, and he sees recreational fisherman in federal waters poaching from the federal waters all the time. Nine days is a lie. The real problem is the representatives on the Council saying we only get 9 days; we need state season. The states are creating poachers. Under sector separation, we kept charter boats 37% under their catch target, while recreational anglers exceeded their annual catch target. Without sector separation, they probably would have exceeded the ACL. We need management in place for the private anglers. Get the Council representatives to stop voting against an advisory panel to help the anglers they represent. He supports Alternative 3.

David Patlovany- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. The red snapper is owned by the entire population of the United States, so we should have the exact same season to fish. If you maintain sector separation, allow the recreational anglers to have a choice of which nine days to fish, such as use some ticket system, so they can choose their days to fish.

Debbie Patlovany- Private angler

The data is flawed. June is a horrible month to fish, it is windy and she wants to choose the days she fishes, if she is going to be so limited to the number of days she can go. She supports Alternative 1.

Jason Delgado- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. The impact of sector separation has been interesting to watch. Specifically, what it has done to the value of permits. It has made him an interested buyer if anyone wants to sell. Also, he does not feel like it is fair that recreational anglers are held accountable and are being judged for exceeding their quotas since it's not under their control and the science the problem.

Johnny Walker – Charter and commercial

For the past couple years with sector separation the charter industry has had a little light on their piece of the pie. They've been able to achieve a sort of resemblance to making a

living. He has begged for accountability; the charter industry wants to know what they're catching. On the recreational side there, is no clue what's being harvested. At the Galveston yacht basin, recreational fishermen come home every day with their limit of sows. He doesn't think that is possible in state waters. Get accountable; get a license with a tag on it for recreational fishermen. It doesn't matter how many fish are in the Gulf if you don't know what you're catching. He supports Alternative 3.

Buddy Guindon- Commercial fisherman

Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD) has a program called iSnapper where you can report every fish you catch. TPWD has done a poor job of reporting recreational harvest. Under regional management, Texas recreational anglers get 6% of the fish in the Gulf, and that will be split between charter, headboat, and private anglers. Reconsider the quality of your state management. In Texas there is no commercial fishery for redfish and trout, and a reduced fishery for flounder. If you make a living on the water in Texas, you don't want to be a part of state management because they'll drive you out of the picture. The fish belong to all of us, including people who eat at restaurants, people who charter fish, and people who fish recreationally on their own boats. We should have a management system for each different group. Business should run businesses and recreational fishermen should have your round access. Coastal Conservation Association and a few members of the Council are blocking the development of a tag program. He supports Alternative 3. He wants to get together with recreational fishermen and help them get past the misinformation they're getting. Better management is available.

Chris Guindon-

Remove the sunset. He supports alternative 3. He wants to run a charter boat someday.

Andrew Reed- Charter

He supports Alternative 3.

Nicholas Gutierrez- Seafood dealer

Get rid of the sunset provision. It was only put in place to prolong the decision. The charter industry wants to create their own path and do their own thing. They want to be separate. Why do the private anglers want to stay tied together when the charter fishermen want a divorce? There is a better way for the private anglers to get better management. Blaming the commercial and charter industries isn't a solution.

John Tyrna- Private angler

There isn't accountability of harvest and he wants better ways to monitor catch. He doesn't have trouble catching his state limit of red snapper within 9 miles. He doesn't poach and shouldn't be punished for it.

Taylor Borel- Charter

He supports Alternative 3.

Greg Ball- Charter

He just put a vessel monitoring system on his boat so he can be accountable for what he catches. He has seen a lot of private anglers fishing illegally for big snappers 40 and 50 miles off the coast when the federal season is closed. He supports Alternative 3.

Mike Osgood- Private angler

The data is clearly flawed. He keeps hearing about data being taken at the dock, but he has never been surveyed. His dad and granddad were shrimpers and owned a retail fish market. He was 10 years old when commercial fishing for redfish and speckled trout was outlawed. If the red snapper stock is in such bad shape why are we allowed to commercially fish for them? The public hearing meetings are just a forum to gripe. He doesn't think that the comments submitted are heard. The Council is going to do what they want to do anyway. He supports Alternative 1.

Otis Horton- Private angler

He is a business man and he sees the numbers and believes that they are all wrong. From what he remembers, he has never been surveyed, despite the fact that he has been fishing for over 50 years. He doesn't know what a commercial fish is worth. Charter fish value must be different too. Commercial fish couldn't possibly be worth \$40 pound. When he catches a fish recreationally, it's got to be worth \$250 pound if you consider the tackle and equipment he buys at the benefit of the local economy where we live. The sonar and new depth finder he bought is benefiting the local economy. Some benefit should be derived, without hurting the fishery, to maximize the financial benefit to Galveston county.

Shawn Owings- Private angler

The season is only nine days in the windiest month of the year. Let's extend the season. He supports Alternative 1.

Laramie Hargrove - Private angler

She supports Alternative 1.

Brandon Saenz – Private angler

He is an offshore captain but was laid-off two weeks ago. He recently tried to find a way to get a federal charter permit so he could fish for a living but he couldn't find one. You can't catch red snapper inshore of 9 miles off of Galveston, water is too hot unless you build illegal reefs. A lot of people don't want to go to other places to fish. It constantly blows 40 knots down in south Texas where there is a state water fishery so, it's hard. He supports Alternative 1.

Keith Leisos – Private angler

Fishes state waters out of Port Mansfield. It is hard for him to get past 9 miles. He would like to buy a bigger boat if the federal season was longer. We've separated a public resource into separate quotas to privatize it. We divided between commercial and recreational. Now we're dividing the recreational quota further. As a result, the headboat guys are being paid per snapper. We need to give the headboat and for-hire fishermen

part of the commercial quota rather than the recreational quota. He supports Alternative 1.

Jonathon Kopp- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. We've separated seasons for commercial and private fishermen. Now headboat fishermen get more of the recreational quota and can fish more days. He didn't fish nine days for snapper last year because he couldn't leave his business. This is the first time he has come to a meeting; he doesn't know if his voice is heard. He suggests we host a meeting in Houston because more recreational anglers would show up there.

Ken Guindon- Commercial fisherman

He supports Alternative 3. Smaller sectors are easier to manage. The commercial sector has had a really good management system for a long time. The charter separation allocation decision was based on catch history. He has empathy for the private anglers and believes they need better management. Get rid of state seasons and use a tag system to manage private anglers. He sees lots of poaching and while it's probably not the people that come to the meeting, it's still happening.

David Woodworth- Charter

He hears that people don't have time to come to meetings. He spends 16 hours a day fishing and working on his boat and he manages to show up; it's not an excuse. He supports Alternative 3.

Roy Dupree- Charter

The charter industry is getting 45 days and they can't get rich off of that. People say they're in the industry and management for the money, but they can't get rich from red snapper trips. There are other fish that help him survive as a business. He supports Alternative 3. The recreational fishermen are poaching. People come in from offshore with big sows hiding in totes. We need to hold those fishermen accountable for the illegal fish they harvest. Those fish aren't caught in state waters off of Galveston.

Mike Short- Charter

He supports Alternative 3. Charter boats need their own program. Recreational fishermen get 365 days in the state and an extra nine federal days. During the state season they go out to the federal waters and steal fish. There is no way that these guys are catching those big fish 20-pound red snapper in state waters off of Galveston.

Kenneth Smith – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1.

Katie Brown - Private angler

She owns a brand new boat. She understands that commercial fishermen are here to make a living. She respects that and uses charter boats to fish when she travels. She has heard that the data is flawed and she would like an opportunity to gain some type of license that would allow her to fish outside of the nine-day federal season. She supports Alternative 1

because it allows for more time to review the data so that it is clear and fair for both sides of the fishery. She wants to follow the rules and knows they impact everyone.

Blake Osgood- Private angler

Keep sector separation sunset in place. He supports Alternative 1. Who knows how many fish are out there? He has been going fishing since he was little and there are swarms of fish out there sometimes ten feet below the surface, 150 yards from a wreck. You aren't supposed to be able to catch red snapper on top water. There are too many fish out there and recreational anglers need more time to fish and get the population under control. No one has asked him how many fish he has caught. He went twice last year and caught his limit each day. We need people to support private anglers.

Zack Franey- Charter

He supports Alternative 3.

Billy Wright- Commercial and charter

Remove the sunset provision from sector separation and support Alternative 3.

Mobile, Alabama
May 25, 2016

Council/Staff

David Walker
Assane Diagne
Charlotte Schiaffo

46 members of the public attended

Ben Fairey - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 2b. Seen a lot of changes and a lot of things go against the charter boats for a long time. One of the things that was detrimental to us was first the moratorium on permits. We didn't realize it at the time when we agreed to it but we lost our historical catch. So as you look now we used to catch more red snappers percentage wise than the private angler and the way I look at it extending A45 gets things back level.

Bill Staff - Charter

For a long while the charter industry has been threatened. Sector separation helped fishery and saved business. He supports the Council's Preferred Alternative 2a.

Richard Alexander - Private angler

He is against sector separation (Amendment 40) and against Amend 45. Let sector separation sunset, resetting rules would be unfair to the fishing public. He supports Alternative 1. Lifetime fisherman. This is a matter of America. It is not about fishing. We are causing regression we are causing America to divide. It should never have been passed. It was passed because they put a sunset on it.

Brian Reeves - Charter

Made money for the first time in years. Sector separation allows anglers on charter vessels to catch the fish they deserve. Private anglers can go to state waters to fish, anglers on charter boats cannot. He supports Alternative 2.

Joseph Nelson - Private Angler

Recreational sector has been divided against itself. If it sunsets it will put pressure on the federal managers to figure this out or hand it over to the states. The states need to take over. The data that the federal management uses is not current. Resource distribution needs consideration. He supports Alternative 1.

Blakeley Ellis - Private angler

Anglers lost access to fishery because of rules. He supports Alternative 1.

Grey Cane - Private angler

He is against sector separation. He supports Alternative 1. Would like Council to stick with original agreement to let this sunset.

Wesley Blacksher - Private angler

The science is not being looked at, red snapper are everywhere. He supports Alternative 1. We were told that the sunset was put in there so that there would be time to look at the science. The Council needs to look at the science after it sunsets.

Brian Annan - Charter

Amend 40 saved the charter industry. Other fish besides red snapper can be caught by recreational anglers. He supports Alternative 3.

George Pfeiffer - Charter

There has been an exponential growth in the recreational fishery. He supports Alternative 2 (options b or c). Made more money last year, than in previous 10 years. Our fishery needs to be sustainable and we need to be accountable. All the charter for hire vessels are accountable. Way more recreational people that are not accountable.

Gordon Burdette - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Tom Ard - Charter

Although they are tough sometimes, management measures have helped the fishery. There is no need for a sunset clause. He supports Alternative 3. Need time to develop good fishery management plans. VMS or phone app system should be mandatory for charter for hire and recreational. Would like to see a recreational fishery management plan. Would like a Recreational AP to start working on solutions for their fishery.

Bobby Kelly - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3 or Alternative 2c. Amendment 45 offsets the unfair state water seasons that the private recreational angler will not admit even exists.

Jerry Andrews - Charter

Private recreational anglers are catching most of the red snapper. He supports Alternative 3 and electronic logbooks.

Russell Smith - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Sean Kelley - Charter

State seasons hurt the fishery. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Consistency has helped his business. Hopes for a Recreational fishery management plan.

Joe Nash - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

John Hollingshead - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Tom Steber – AP Headboat Pilot & Charter for hire / President, Alabama CFA

Favors of Alternative 3.

Margaret Miller - Private angler

Opposed to extending sunset. It is a mismanagement of resource. All recreational anglers should be together, not fighting. Sector separation is a short term short-term fix for a long-term problem. Better science is needed. She supports Alternative 1.

Gary Bryant - Charter

The charter industry is not trying to take anything away from anybody. New ideas are needed from all participants in the fishery. He supports Alternative 3.

Jimmy Waller - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Sector Separation saved his business. It is not perfect. It is a beginning.

Bill Jeffries – Private angler

Favors Alternative 1.

Sean Sullivan – Private angler

Favors Alternative 1. Sectors do not need to fight each other. State management is needed. He opposes sector separation and supports Alternative 1.

Casey Drioue - Charter

He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Skipper Thierry - Charter

Sector separation saved charter boat industry. Supports Alternative 3. Provides stability for the charter for hire.

Ashley Walters – Private angler

Supports Alternative 1. Feds are mismanaging the resources, state supervision is needed. Recreational anglers should not have to depend on charter vessels for access to fishing. Recreational anglers should be able to fish as long as charter boats. He opposes sector separation and supports Alternative 1.

Marty Norder – Private angler

Sector separation pitted sectors against each other. Council needs to represent all the fishing public. Supports Alternative 1.

Vincent Duffy – Private angler

Federal government has messed up the fishery. Supports Alternative 1.

Timothy Smith – Private angler

Fed government is mismanaging data. A 9-day season is unfair. Sectors need to come together. Supports Alternative 1.

Randy Boggs - Headboat

Sector separation has worked for the for-hire industry. Supports Alternative 3. New ideas from private anglers are needed.

Susan Boggs - Charter

The for-hire industry is not taking fish away from anybody. The for-hire industry provides access to those who do not own boats. She supports Alternative 3 or at a minimum Alternative 2a.

Michael Wiederman- Private angler

He supports Alternative 2a. Sectors need to work together. States should take over management.

Shawn Miller – Private angler

We Need to be fair to all, 9 days are not enough. Fed government is splitting sectors on purpose. Against amendment 45 and all its alternatives.

Corpus Christi, Texas
May 26, 2016

Council/Staff

Greg Stunz
Emily Muehlstein
Karen Hoak

52 members of the public attended.

Michael Henry – Private angler

He opposes sector separation and supports Alternative 1.

Dave Sullivan – Private angler

He speaks on behalf of the Port Aransas Boatman Association, which was founded in 1932 by a group of charter fishermen. They work to preserve the heritage of their guides and the interests and needs of the recreational fishermen. The Association supports Alternative 1, and they are against extending sector separation for any period of time. The Association is also in favor of regional management and will continue to be involved with the process. The whole management system is flawed, the data is flawed, and there are false assumptions being used. The Council needs additional time to figure things out.

Steve Johnson- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1, no action. Sector separation is forcing recreational fisherman and the charter fishermen to fight amongst themselves. They're fishing for the entertainment and for the opportunity to catch red snapper, not to sell them. The economic impacts that come from the recreational industry; hotels, restaurants, and gear purchases, are much larger than the economic impacts of the commercial fishery.

Claude Jennings- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1.

Jake Mynier – Charter

He urges the Council to pass Alternative 1. He is against commercial catch shares and individual fishing quotas.

Ron Moser – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1 and is against catch shares because it monetizes a private resource. He supports regional management because state waters don't have red snapper but the federal waters do. The size of red snapper in state waters is far smaller than the size of fish in federal waters. The science is horrible. Texas has an abundance of fish. He supports regional management and state control. The Council continues to restrict public access and make unruly decisions based on flawed data. He recently went amberjack fishing in 150ft water and struggled to catch anything but snapper.

Kesley Gibson – Private angler

She opposes the extension or elimination of sector separation and supports Alternative 1. The charter industry should not take away her access to the offshore fishery.

Virginia Moser- Private angler

She supports Alternative 1, no action. Sector separation is not fair to private anglers that own their own boats.

Chas Downy- Private angler

He is against sector separation and supports Alternative 1. The sunset should not be eliminated or extended.

Mike Nugent – Charter

The Port Aransas Boatman Association has been opposed to Amendment 40 from the get go because it is a preamble to catch shares and individual fishing quotas. Every time you hear supporters of sector separation stand up, they say they want accountability. If they wanted that, National Marine Fisheries Service would have put in a data collection system 10 years ago. But the agency isn't interested in a log book program for charter boats. It's a fish grab and therefore a cash grab. He is opposed to any extension or elimination of the sunset. He supports Alternative 1. If things progress this way, the Texas charter boat industry will be gutted when it comes to the number of fish they get. It's finally starting to get across that catch shares aren't going to make everyone rich and profitable. There aren't enough fish for 1200 vessels so, you'll have to steal them from somebody. He is against catch shares and individual fishing quotas; they won't lead to anything good for anyone.

Tammy Graham – Private angler

She opposes the term "private recreational angler" because it plays into the terminology that none of them were in favor of to begin with. She was at the Amendment 40 public hearing in Port Aransas and not one person was in favor of sector separation, but the Council went and did it anyway. She is here again asking that the Council listen to their voices. She is not in favor of the Council doing anything because Council decisions don't benefit her. She supports Alternative 1, No action.

David McKey – Private angler

He Supports Alternative 1.

Jake Cross- Charter

He is in favor of Alternative 1.

Alex Tompkins- Private angler

Opposes sector separation. It's scary to privatize a public resource so, he supports Alternative 1.

Normand Oates- Private angler

This whole thing is a rouse. He wants to know where the alternatives come from and what they're based on. What are the season lengths based on? How long has it been since

the Gulf Council has done real research on the biomass of red snapper in Texas? Both groups of recreational anglers should get at least 45 days. He has a small boat so, when the wind blows he can't go out in the nine-day season. The research is old, out of touch with what is going on in the water, it doesn't mean anything. You can't catch any other species out there because there are so many snapper. Sector separation is like building a 6-lane superhighway and putting a 45-mile speed limit on it. People are going to cheat because your law is wrong and there is no enforcement. Until the Council shows him that it knows what it's doing, and the research is based on fact, he believes that Council alternatives don't mean anything.

Paul Kratzig - Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. He has real concern that public resources being utilized by commercial interests that are getting large sums of money at the expense of private anglers. The economic impacts from recreational industry are one of the more beneficial things that occurs in the state. All other public resources like oil and land use profits are paid back for the taxpayers benefit. Council decisions are benefiting special groups and are too heavily weighted in favor of the commercial fishery.

Cliff Strain- Charter and private angler

He is against sector separation and individual fishing quotas because he doesn't want to sell off the industry to those who can afford a lobbyist. He supports Alternative 1, no action, and he supports regional management. The science is bad, and he wonders if NOAA has data that supports the biomass that is in Texas. He disagrees with the estimates of the offshore takes from Texas anglers. What about migratory patterns? Have we done tagging of red snapper? The Council is worried about triggerfish, but he guarantees that the overpopulation of red snapper is harming them. He went to fish on a reef effected by red tide where the red snapper died and he caught tons of triggers. There needs to be better science. We need to separate the western zone from the eastern zone which is much different. The concentration of biomass off Texas is offshore, not in state waters.

Mark Mueller – Charter

He opposes individual fishing quotas and supports Alternative 1. He has been a charter fisherman for a long time and has seen the red snapper population explode. It's a joke to think that red snapper isn't healthy. Now the water turns red when you chum from the boat. People are catching snapper on beef jerky and places that have never held snapper have them now.

Troy Adler- Private angler

He sees unfairness towards the recreational fishermen. Nine days is ridiculous. He supports Alternative 1.

Lela Caldwell- Family fish-house owner

She would like the sunset provision removed and supports Alternative 3.

Mike Miglini- Charter

The sunset provision should be removed; he supports Alternative 3. It will decrease the economic uncertainty for the for-hire sector, and it allows each group to develop a management system that works best for them. Charter and private boaters are different and deserve to have different management. Each state has created their own seasons in state waters that the charter boats can't fish. Removing sector separation doesn't get people where they want to go. Going to a 16 day season is not a win. Developing a flexible management program, like harvest tags that allows for better data collection and utilization of the resource. We need a world-class management system for our world-class fishery. The Texas data comes from Texas Parks and Wildlife, not the federal government. Simply saying you want to end sector separation isn't going to get you where you need to go; a better management system is in order. Retribution, retaliation, and being kicked off a public dock for exercising their first Amendment right and disagreeing with an association is unfair. Lots of people who are afraid of retaliation and are not here to voice their opinions.

Ron Woltesdorf- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1 because the data is not true.

Jamie Yeane- Headboat

He supports Alternative 1.

Ben Rutledge- Private angler and reef builder

He supports Alternative 1. The data collection methods were inaccurate and the population of red snapper is much larger than is being recognized. The separation of the sectors doesn't solve the problem.

Walter Brothers- Private angler

He is in favor of no action; Alternative 1. Snapper are voracious and pushing other fish off, vermillion used to be abundant but he doesn't find them anymore. He supports regional management.

Robert Jones- Environmental Defense Fund

He speaks in favor of Alternative 2, option b, for the five-year extension. He thinks recreational management is totally broken and we need to find solutions that are customized to federally permitted charter boats and private anglers. Nine-day seasons are punitive and that need to be fixed by developing management programs that are customized to both sectors.

Brenda Ballard- Private angler

She supports Alternative 1. Recreational and commercial fisherman are different but they are all after the same fish and the fact that charter fishermen get more than private anglers is not fair. The Council needs to spend as much time collecting data as they spend holding hearings. They need to talk to anglers and find a way to get the right and fair way to collect the data.

Jake Herring- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. There has been a lot of good comments including the idea that sound data needs to be gathered.

Doug Webb- Private angler

He agrees with the rest of the commenters and supports Alternative 1. These hearings will be heard with the same results and the Council will do what they want to do.

John Jalufka- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1. Been fishing his whole life and the population of snapper was once down, but now he can't catch anything else on any type of bait. It doesn't matter how hard he tries; he can't get away from the snapper. It's a shame to let charter boats go and kill fish he has to throw back. Anywhere he goes he finds big snapper. The data is flawed. He can drift for miles and continue to catch snapper. There is no season for them to catch snapper, and as a licensed and tax paying citizen, he has as much right as anyone to catch those fish. We do need a better management program.

Jackson Lomax- Private and charter

He supports Alternative 1. He has cut open snapper and seen in their bellies that they're eating sharks, triggers, and everything else out there. The system is out of bounds, the red snapper are destroying the rest of the gamefish. There are people who have engineered projects to get fish closer in state waters but recently money has been reallocated to other projects instead. It's time that the research changes.

Steven Schmidt- Private angler

He supports Alternative 1.

Angelica Benchoff -

She supports Alternative 1.

David Norris - Private angler

He supports Alternative 1.

Troy Williamson- Private angler

He is in favor of Alternative 1, take no action. He was in Tampa at the Advisory Panel meeting when sector separation came up. This is like déjà vu, the preferred alternative was sector separation and the Advisory Panel voted to take no action; they voted against sector separation, but that advice was not taken by the Council, who elected to implement sector separation. It was a split vote on the Council, and one of the reasons it came to being was the compromise of adding the sunset. That is why we're here commenting on on this. The sunset was added so sector separation would pass. The same mechanism is here today to change rules in the middle of the game. The Council does not necessarily vote for the public good. The Council votes for its own private interests. The system is irretrievable broken. He supports regional management or management by the state, but not under the auspices of the federal government as it is designed today. Legislation to change the Magnuson-Stevens Act, or transfer red snapper to the states or multi-state body, is the only thing that will cure this problem.

Gretna, Louisiana
May 26, 2016

Council/Staff

Ed Swindell
Myron Fischer
Assane Diagne
Charlotte Schiaffo

17 members of the public attended

Charlie Caplinger – Private angler

He primarily fishes out of Venice, LA with his friends and family. He is against sector separation and supports Alternative 1, no action. He uses guides and thinks they are a great resource because they're on the water all the time. Guides see what's happening and keep him informed. Charter operators should be able to fish in state waters so, Reef Fish Amendment 30B should be repealed. In Louisiana there isn't a guide that targets red snapper, it's too expensive to go catch two fish per person. Guides go catch tuna, grouper, amberjack and then as a bonus they'll pick up a couple of snapper. The private sector does target red snapper. Anglers on charter boats are recreational anglers but they've been pulled out and given their own season. He supports Alternative 1 and believes that sector separation crates arbitrary animosity between the two groups. Recreational anglers deserve an opportunity to have sector separation analyzed before putting it into place for perpetuity.

Steve Tomeny - Charter

He has been charter fishing since the early 70's and currently owns two large multi-passenger boats. The sunset provision is not needed. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3. Amendment 40 came about because the federal permits are no longer issued so, the number of permits can't grow. At the same time, the private angling sector has expanded with no limitations. That is why sector separation came about. He never fishes state waters; years ago there weren't fish in state waters. Amendment 30b forced them to fish offshore and years ago, it was determined that there would be no federal season with all the state water openings. The private anglers have not come up with a management plan. It's not his position to tell the private anglers what to do but, he knows that the charter industry they needed to do something to preserve access. Red snapper is a draw for his business and he likes the 46 day season. The charter fleet in on track for getting better accountability measures and last year, charter boats stayed below the annual catch limit.

Shane Cantrell – Charter Fisherman's Association

Sector separation is the foundation for solving many fishing problems. Many fish caught in federal waters are claimed to be caught in state waters. The for-hire component was 37% under their annual catch target for the first year of sector separation. They left a lot of fish in the water while, private anglers exceeded their annual catch target. Private anglers operate completely differently than the charter boats. As a result of sector

separation, everyone in the Country continues to have access to the fishery. Rather than tearing down the systems that are working, the Council should start working on solutions and stop attacking commercial management and the developing charter management. Removing sector separation would only give private anglers a handful of extra days. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

Scott Hickman – Charter, commercial, and recreational

He knows the fishery in south Louisiana. The rest of the Gulf would be lucky to enjoy the resources that exist in Louisiana. Federally permitted boats can't fish all year, they only get 46 days to fish and that is discriminatory. Let them develop a plan that allows them to access the fishery in the federal waters. Recreational anglers fishing from charter vessels need to be able to fish more. Venice captains do need red snapper because it's a big part of their business. 10 years ago the leadership of charter boats in Texas and Florida came together to start working on sector separation. Coastal Conservation Association wouldn't get on board so here is where we are. He believes the charter sector can develop a good management plan. He supports sector separation and is in favor of Alternative 3.

David Cresson - Private angler

He asks the Council to reconsider the dates of the meeting. The Thursday before Memorial Day weekend is a difficult day to host a meeting because everyone is fishing. He agrees that red snapper are not the target species of charter captains in Louisiana. He enjoys a good relationship with charter captains in Louisiana and many directors of the Coastal Conservation Association are charter boat operators. He hears a lot of talk about accountability and he believes that giving management control over the state of Louisiana would be in everyone's best interest. Amendment 40 was passed with the understanding that there was a sunset provision and now, after just one year, people are pushing for the removal of the sunset. The Council went against their own Advisory Panel and the state directors and scientists to approve Amendment 40. The recreational sector is being divided and conquered and he thinks that everyone needs to work together. The charter fleet does give access to America, but- when he wanted to bring his baseball team on a headboat in Orange Beach his trip was cancelled because the boat didn't want to use their quota on a half-booked boat. He opposes sector separation and supports Alternative 1.

Maurice Darquin – Charter

He is an inshore guide and has heard that sector separation is hurting boat dealers and other businesses. He is against sector separation and supports Alternative 1.

Ben Tucker – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1.

Robert Boudet – Private angler

He supports Alternative 1, no action.

Julie Herbert – Private angler and serves on Wildlife and Fishery Commission

She fishes with her family. She runs an environmental permitting company and she ensures that development doesn't disrupt estuaries and rookeries. She is a member of

Coastal Conservation Association. She has seen sector separation divide and conquer. LA Creel is the best fisheries information in the nation because they've raised the cost of the licenses and there are only 8 offshore landing places in Louisiana. The recreational sector needs to come together to ensure the federal government doesn't take away access the resource. She supports Alternative 1.

**Webinar
May 31, 2016**

Council/Staff
Emily Muehlstein
Bernadine Roy

14 members of the public attended.

James Zurbrick – Commercial

He supports Alternative 3: Remove the sunset provision for sector separation and continue the separate management of the federal for-hire and private angling components. He has seen it work in the commercial sector by them coming up with their own plan. Wants the recreational sector to come up with their own management plan. This is about conservation and safety.

Eric Brazer - Gulf of Mexico Shareholders Alliance

The Shareholders Alliance Supports Alternative 3. Sector separation is doing what it was intended to do. Clearly the old way of doing business wasn't working. The private anglers and the charter fisherman are all dealing with shorter seasons. The recreational sector as a whole went over its quota for the better part of a quarter century. So clearly things weren't working. Sector separation is giving fisherman who want to solve this problem, the charter and the headboat sectors, a way to solve it. Sector separation gives them a chance to build a management plan that works for them. It worked really well on the commercial side of things and we want the charter guys and the headboat guys to have the same opportunity that the commercial sector has had. Private anglers deserve the opportunity as well. Eliminating the sector separation and enacting the sunset is going to lead to a mismanaged system. Ending sector separation isn't going to help private anglers and it's only going to hurt the charter boat. If we keep this sunset provision, nobody wins. We really shouldn't be putting together and supporting measures that hurt one group in order to protect and help another. He urges the private anglers to work towards a solution that works for them.

George McKinney – Private angler

Would like to see the sunset take effect. He has charterboat fished and private boat fished for over 60 years for snapper. He loves charterboat operators and knows they work very hard for a living. He believes that the historical data that was used to determine the current division did not take into account the large, technological advances that now enable the private fleet to catch more fish than they could in the 1970s and 80s, before they had pinpoint navigation systems, sonar and everything else. He would like to see sector separation sunset and the system should be re-evaluated from scratch.

Reef Fish Amendment 45
Summary of Written Comments
June 17, 2016

Comments received since the April 2016 Council meeting

Support for Alternative 1: No Action

- Sector separation is unfair and unpopular.
- The nine-day season is unacceptably short.
- Private anglers should have the same opportunity to fish as any other type of angler.
- Sector separation is stealing from the public to privatize the resource and give it to a for-profit industry.
- State guide boats should not have been excluded from sector separation.
- The program needs to be reviewed and evaluated prior to consideration of extension.
- The Council should abide by their three-year commitment.
- Sector separation is a disservice to private anglers who provide more economic benefit than charter and commercial anglers.
- It is too soon to seek the removal of the sunset provision.
- Recreational fishermen should have a longer season than charter fishermen.
- The allocation of red snapper among sectors is disproportionate.
- Private anglers should not be forced to pay for extra opportunities to fish on charter or commercial “dude trips.”
- Sector separation is discriminatory and does not allow fair access to the resources.
- Recreational fishermen have lower discards than commercial fishermen and should be the ones reaping those benefits.
- Recreational fishermen build reefs to restore the fishery and should be able to reap those benefits.
- The value of charter permits has raised dramatically due to the manipulation of regulations.
- Sector separation was illegal to begin with because it allocates between “components” of the fishery rather than fishermen. The Magnuson-Stevens Act does not define a charter operator as a recreational fishermen and federal for-hire reef fish permit holders are not “United States Fishermen.” The anglers fishing from for-hire boats are the fishermen.
- Recreational anglers outnumber all others but are under-represented by fisheries management policy.
- The quota should be distributed so that each sector gets an equal number of days to fish.
- The Council has created controversy between sectors who used to work together.
- Charter and private anglers should have the same regulations.
- It is unconstitutional to gift a public resource to a select few.

Support for Alternative 3: Remove the Sunset Provision

- Sector separation is needed and was long overdue.
- The charter boat sector should be protected so anglers without their own boats can fish.
- Charter vessels and headboats should be allowed to move forward with their own fishery management plans through Amendments 41 and 42.
- The industry wants to become accountable.
- Charter fishermen need more time to gather data so better management decisions can be made.
- Sector separation has allowed charter businesses grow.

Other Comments

- The federal fisheries management system is corrupt and anglers have lost faith in the system.
- Support for regional management.
- Support for state based management.
- Support for the Graves Bill H.R. 3094.
- The recreational red snapper season needs to be longer.
- It's hard to find an opportunity to fish in the short federal season.
- The nine-day season puts anglers at a significant safety risk when people are forced to fish in inclement weather.
- The short red snapper season has caused effort shifting and inshore fisheries are in decline.
- Incompatible state seasons shorten the federal season for private anglers.
- The short private season is disproportionate to commercial and charter seasons.
- The Council needs to get better fisheries data.
- Consider collecting input on stock health from local fishermen.
- Private and charter fishermen should report their catch.
- Red snapper should be a sport fish.
- Red snapper shouldn't be harvested commercially.
- The red snapper stock is healthy and the annual catch limit should be increased.
- The red snapper population has overtaken the Gulf and is damaging other reef fish populations.
- Discarding red snapper during the closed season is frustrating.
- Restrictive rules and seasons encourage illegal fishing.
- Bycatch from shrimping and commercial fishing has a greater impact on fish stock health than recreational fishing.
- Red snapper should be managed with a tag system. Give each private angler 25 tags and allow them to harvest 2-fish per day over 3-months.
- Consider opening the private recreational season on weekends only.
- Amberjack shouldn't be closed during snapper season.
- Recreational anglers should be allowed to fish all year long.

- Charter boats should fish under the commercial annual catch limit.
- Consider closing the fishery entirely until the red snapper stock is healthy.
- Charter boats are hurting the fisheries.
- Commercial fishermen don't report their catch honestly.
- The Council favors commercial interests.
- The Council should listen to the majority of fishermen rather than a few "big shots."
- Restaurants on the Gulf coast serve farm raised and imported fish while commercial red snapper are exported.
- The commercial industry overfishes red snapper and feeding the country with the resource should not be a priority.
- Catch share systems give a public resource to a select few.
- U.S. Citizens should not be denied their basic rights to access a natural resource.