

June 2015 Joint SAFMC&GMFMC Meeting Public Comments

I am Chris McCaffity, a commercial fisherman and seafood advocate from NC. Please keep an open mind as you think about these comments and questions.

Comments:

1. Neither council should pass any new laws until all the existing fishery regulations are publicly reviewed and revised or repealed if necessary.
2. South Florida's unique fisheries should be managed independently.
3. Stakeholders should have more say in how each species' TAC is managed.
4. Reducing regulatory discards and discard mortality should be a top priority.
5. Now is the time to focus more on enhancing our fisheries and domestic seafood supply than just restricting the public's freedom to access them.

Questions:

1. Why are Speckled Hind and Warsaw Grouper legal in the gulf while being illegal in the Atlantic even though they are considered the same stocks?
2. Are the councils sharing information that could help us prevent another Idle Iron type tragedy from occurring in the Atlantic if drilling is allowed here?
3. What steps are the councils taking to ensure that more of America's public resources are not privatized and eventually owned by foreign entities?
4. Why want the SAFMC properly manage consumer quotas with appropriate possession limits and by-catch allowances to avoid multiple extended closures that result in tons of projected dead discards every year?
5. Why is there no effort to control invasive lionfish with a clean and effective fishery like trapping male lionfish using female lionfish pheromones as bait?

Thanks for your time and thoughtful consideration. I am always happy to answer any questions and would be interested in hearing the council's collective thoughts on these questions and comments. freefish7@hotmail.com