

June 7, 2026

Dear Members of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council,

I am writing to express my grave concerns regarding the current direction of Red Snapper (RS) management, and particularly with the recent EFPs. Abandoning a rebuilding plan and allowing unaccountable removals due to political pressure undermines years of dedicated work just as we are nearing the finish line.

During the visioning meetings in 2013-2014, fishermen proposed actionable ways to improve recreational data collection—many of which were included in Amendment 46. Unfortunately, the Council seems to have lost that vision and sidelined those critical efforts, leading us back into a state of uncertainty.

Allowing significant removals without incorporating the data-gathering mechanisms from Amendment 46 provides no long-term benefit. Furthermore, taking these actions before the completion of SEDAR 90 is premature and will likely skew the assessment results. Having participated in this fishery since the implementation of the first Amendment and held the first round of SG permits, I have seen firsthand the damage caused when management ignores past mistakes. It took decades for the Red Snapper fishery to return to the robust levels I witnessed in the 80s and 90s, and we are still struggling to rebuild other species like Red Porgy, Red Grouper, and Cobia.

If these EFPs were to proceed, the entire fishing community—commercial, recreational, and consumer alike—would suffer. I urge you to listen to the scientific community and prioritize the long-term health of the fishery over short-term political interests.

As a commercial fisherman, I take pride in providing our country with a sustainable, wild protein source. This is not a matter of commercial versus recreational interests; it is about ensuring an abundant fishery for future generations. I encourage all stakeholders to engage with the management process and work as a team. The Magnuson-Stevens Act has served us well for a long time, and we must allow it to continue functioning as intended.

Sincerely,

Jack Cox