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Subject:	Information on Dr. Hester"s report
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Hi all,

We wanted to share the following points, which we think are relevant to Dr. Hester's presentation this afternoon. Please let me know if you have questions.

Cheers,

Holly

- South East Data Assessment and Review (SEDAR) is a democratic stock assessment process. It is important for all stakeholders to get involved in fisheries management, including the SEDAR process, where data are collected, reviewed and interpreted for use in fisheries management.

- The red snapper stock assessment process began in 2005 with ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement.
    - Stakeholders are invited to help review data, offer opinions and explanations for data trends.
    - This is the effective time and place to raise questions about the data going into a stock assessment.

- National Standard 2 details the use of "best available science", and the courts have confirmed that the responsibility is to use the best information "available at the time of preparation" of the stock assessment. [§§600.320(d)(2) and 600.340(b)] If new information surfaces after the preparation of the stock assessment, that information will be used during the next stock assessment. This process is necessary to ensure that the management resulting from stock assessments does not become endlessly delayed.

- Fishery models account for different types of data. By aiming to approximate natural systems, these complex models are built to be able to test the influence of various data on the outcome of the model. In the case of red snapper, changing data like pre-1975 catches (even cutting these in half!) does not change the story: red snapper are grossly overfished and large cuts are necessary to ensure the future of the fishery.

- A large panel of the region's best fisheries scientists discussed the data issues brought up in Dr. Hester's report and found no reason to throw early catch data out. Extensive high-caliber peer review confirmed these findings.

- More funding for more frequent stock assessments should be a priority in the southeast, however, no data is needed for effective long-term management, and the Council's duty to the public and stakeholders is to pursue that management regardless of data levels.

Holly Binns
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