

March 2015 SAFMC Meeting Public Comments

I am Chris McCaffity, a commercial fisherman and fisheries advocate who has been offering simple solutions to mitigate many of the negative impacts related to rushed regulations.

Since the Magnuson-Stevens Act hard deadlines have been met, we should take some time to “Stop and Review” so we can learn what is working well and what isn’t. We should think about ways to greatly reduce the MILLIONS of pounds of dead regulatory discards that resulted from the rush to meet those congressional deadlines. We should consider ways to enhance our fisheries rather than just restricting access to them so we can feed more people, create more recreational opportunity, and generate more revenue without overfishing. We should acknowledge advances in satellite technology that already monitor Marine Protected Areas. We need to discuss offshore energy production and offer suggestions like artificial reefs and hatcheries as mitigation options. We should also have plans in place to avoid a repeat of the gulf’s ongoing Idle Iron tragedy. Stakeholders should be allowed to decide how our Total Allowable Catch limits will be managed. We should try techniques that have proven effective in other areas like using female lionfish pheromones as bait for trapping male lionfish.

I respectfully ask the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council and everyone else reading these comments to support a Stop and Review policy before any more fishery laws are passed.

It is time to focus more on enhancing our fisheries than restricting access to them in wasteful ways. We should work toward a common goal of healthy fisheries that are responsibly harvested with very little waste. Our fisheries should be a model that others around the globe will want to follow.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I am always happy to answer any questions. freefish7@hotmail.com