



June 8, 2012

David Cupka, Chairman  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Chairman Cupka:

I am writing on behalf of the South Atlantic Fishermen's Association and our seventy-five members to express our support of the Snapper Grouper Advisory Panel's recent motion on VMS made at the AP's last meeting and written in the Snapper Grouper AP Report contained in the June briefing book. It reads:

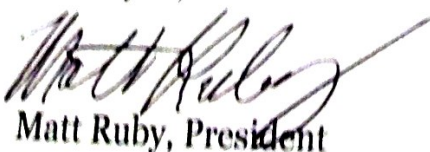
*MOTION: SUGGEST TO THE COUNCIL THAT VMS BE MANDATORY FOR ANY VESSEL (COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL) HARVESTING FISH IN SA WATERS.*

While it may not be possible for the Council to require that all vessels have VMS units, we support the requirements for VMS units for as many vessels as possible. We know that this will protect already established marine reserves that are not seeing the enforcement they need in order to assist in rebuilding of "overfished" species and those species experiencing "overfishing". For those of us that can hang on as commercial fishermen until snapper grouper stocks are rebuilt, we want to make sure that this happens as quickly as possible by eliminating illegal fishing in these important marine reserves.

Our commercial fishermen members welcome the opportunity to have VMS units. Not only does it help showcase our commitment to responsible harvesting, but VMS units can increase safety. **It is inconceivable to us that we are the only region in the U.S. that does not require vessel monitoring systems, observer coverage, video monitoring or electronic logbooks.** The Council has our support in implementing the tools needed to properly monitor and manage the South Atlantic snapper grouper fishery. We hope the Council will make the right choice at the June meeting and require VMS for all South Atlantic vessels.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at [info@southerncatch.com](mailto:info@southerncatch.com) or call (843) 902-4734. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Thank you,



Matt Ruby, President

South Atlantic Fishermen's Association