

Council members,

My name is Chris McCaffity. These are my written comments about Amendment 16. My suggestions apply to both gag grouper and vermilion snapper. The best way to preserve freedom and enhance both fisheries would be to start an aggressive artificial reef program. The reefs should be placed on barren bottom in depths that would best support gags or vermilion snapper. The reefs form the base for the food chain. They also give young fish a place to hide and grow. If the tiny fish cannot find a place to live before they hit cold water, they will die. There can be no denying the fact that more habitat equals more fish. I understand funding could be a problem for this action. I believe you could unite recreational and commercial fishermen along with private businesses to raise much of the money needed. This would be the perfect marriage of aquaculture and commercially caught wild fish. I know there will be an annual quota on both species. I hope the quota will be reasonable. There need to be trip limits in place and should be adjusted up or down quarterly to insure the quota is met and the fishery remains OPEN ALL YEAR. Shutting down one fishery will only put more pressure on other fisheries. There will be no way to make a profit or supply fresh local seafood if you close the vermilion snapper and all grouper but 100 pounds of snowies Jan. 1 to May 1. At the very least there should be a reduced trip limit during that time so fishermen can target other fish and not waste the resource by throwing back hurt and dieing fish. You could also reduce pressure on all bottom fish by allowing true commercial fishermen to sell a bag limit of any fish they do not have a limited entry federal permit for. Recreational fishermen that hold a commercial license to pretend to be commercial fishermen when it is easy or glamorous should not be allowed to sell ANY FISH. These tax evading, greedy, imposters flood the market with mahi, blue fin tuna, or anything else they catch and lower the price for true commercial fishermen. I pray the council will find a healthy balance between management measures and American liberty.

Thank you,

CHRIS

Council members,

My name is Chris McCaffity. These are my comments about the interim rule to close the Red Snapper fishery. The council should follow the amendment process and not attack our freedom with an interim rule shutting this fishery down. I will be the first to acknowledge that Red Snapper need some help. The best way to help them would be with artificial reefs in areas they would live. Red Snapper are often a bycatch while commercial fishing for other fish in the south Atlantic. The council says Red Snapper have a 90% mortality rate. We should never waste any of this precious resource. All fishermen should be allowed to keep one Red Snapper of any size per person per day as a bycatch. These common sense actions would allow the Red Snapper to multiply without accidentally killing them for no reason. The limits could be increased as the fishery rebounds. There is no hook and line fishery that should ever be totally shut down. There will always be some that are caught while targeting others.

Thank you,

*CHRIS*

Council members,

My name is Chris McCaffity. These are my comments about National Standard 1 Guidelines. The Annual Catch Limits (ACLs) should take into account the inherent flaws in assessing stocks. You should never make cuts so severe that they threaten to put hard working American fishermen out of business. The reasonable (ACLs) should be managed with trip limits. These trip limits should be adjusted up or down quarterly to insure the quota is met and the fishery remains OPEN ALL YEAR. With (ACLs) in place it should not matter when the fish are caught. The more different fish we can catch means the pressure is spread out over many species throughout the year. The Accountability Measures should also involve trip limits adjusted quarterly to insure the (ACLs) are met and the fishery remains OPEN ALL YEAR. The council must also be held accountable for arbitrarily putting fishermen out of business even for a day. It is un-American to strike down our freedom to make a living and supply Americans access to a public resource that is already controlled with (ACLs). The council can also enhance all fisheries with artificial reefs. This is the American way. Our founding fathers would much rather we increased the number of fish by enhancing the fishery rather than our government seizing more power by taking away some of the freedom so many Americans fought and died for. The council must also be held accountable to our Constitution and Declaration of Independence, and not just our corrupt congress of today.

Thank you,

*CHRIS*