From: Myra Brouwer
To: Mike Collins
Subject: FW: New Information Regarding Amendment 17B
Date: Wednesday, March 09, 2011 11:15:07 AM

COULD YOU SEND THSI ONE OUT TOO?

-----Original Message-----
From: JoeMesser1@aol.com [mailto:JoeMesser1@aol.com]
Sent: Tue 3/8/2011 8:12 PM
To: Myra Brouwer
Cc: oceanmaster@bellsouth.net; Fishdelph@aol.com; Edward.Little@noaa.gov; wade_graft@yahoo.com; Dondemaria@aol.com; quickrelief@aol.com; rtspindrift@aol.com; kwonthefly@aol.com; RaeAnn76@aol.com
Subject: New Information Regarding Amendment 17B

Dear Myra:

Don DeMaria forwarded some of your recent emails regarding the subject issue and upcoming council meetings. As you know from his correspondence, we had a meeting here in the Florida Keys with some of the most experienced deep drop individuals from both the scientific and recreational fishing side of this issue. The meeting took place this evening at my house and I wanted to summarize our conclusions and recommendations quickly as timing is important due to your meeting schedule. More detailed information can certainly be provided as needed.

In attendance:
Ralph Delph, Murray Shatt, Don DeMaria, Ed Little, Wade Graft, Joe Messer (meeting host).

Understand that our information is coming from some of the most respected and experienced fishermen in the Keys. Ed Little attended the meeting and it is my understanding that he will be supplying a more detailed summary with some of the background of the individuals present. Key information was provided by Ralph Delph, Murray Shatt and Don DeMaria. We believe this is vital information to protecting the warsaw grouper and speckled hind while still providing critical relief to the recreational fishing industry in the Keys. These individuals are willing to supply information to validate their claims and cooperate in addressing the council's concerns fully as are we all.

We believe there may have been some significant issues overlooked in the management conclusions regarding the warsaw grouper and speckled hind. Due to the enormous negative impact 17B and the grouper closure has had on the Florida Keys recreational fishing industry, we request that the council reconsider 17B based on the following:

1. Warsaw and speckled hind is simply not caught beyond 500' depths
2. Juvenile snowy groupers are rarely ever caught beyond 500' depths

Therefore, a very simple yet extremely important and powerful change could be made to the amendment. Allow recreational fishing, year round, beyond 500' depth with reasonable bag limits for all of the species of concern covered in 17B. No size limit as they will be dead when extracted from that depth. Obviously, still no take for the warsaw and speckled hind but they are not in those depths anyway. Conversely, simply change the closure to be from 240' to 500'.

This simple change has no negative impact on the warsaw grouper or speckled hind at all. Our experts, with fishing history of deep dropping for over the past 30 years, simply confirm those species do not exist at those depths. This actually improves 17B by allowing reasonable fishing for snowies, blue line tiles, yellowedge and others as they count against limits.
Currently, you can still fish for rose fish and limited golden tile. While fishing for those species, snowies, blue lines, yellowedges and the rest would be discarded as illegal until rose fish are caught and the limit on golden tile is reached. No one desires this but with all of the other closures, charter captains are being forced into some drastic measures simply to survive.

Furthermore, we understand that recreational fishing accounts for less than 5% of the fishery covered by 17B. This requested change to 17B will have no impact on the targeted species to be protected, may actually help other species of concern and provide significant economic relief for many. There is no risk and incredible upside.

We stand ready to cooperate fully in providing more data and/or assisting in any way possible to move this forward. Time is of the essence as some of these charter guys are hanging on by a thread. Please consider our request with urgency.

Sincerely,

Joe Messer
Recreational Fisherman