Hello,

I am writing to you to express my concern regarding the SAFMC's urge to close snapper fishing. I have been fishing offshore (at least 3-4 times per month) for approx 10 years and I can tell you first hand that the snapper population is thriving. When I first started out in the late 90's I fished on party boats. If you had caught one snapper all day it was considered an awesome trip. These days we go out and if you don't have a limit (2 per person) it is considered a not so stellar day. This goes to show you that the current regulations i.e. size and bag limits are working. I have never seen so many juvenile and adult snapper in my life. With this being said, I am not apposed to changing the current size or bag limit if the SAMFC has to do something by law, I can understand that. The major problem here is that they are trying to shut the entire thing down with flawed data, which they admit, and in turn will create a huge negative impact in so many ways.

Initially this closure will drastically affect jobs and the economy. There are a huge number of people whose livelihood depends on snapper fishing, i.e. commercial fishermen, party boat captains and owners, bait & tackle stores ect.... I am the Regional Sales Manager of the Florida territory for a marine safety importer and manufacturer here in Jacksonville (Revere Supply Co, Inc.). If these closures take place, then no commercial boat will be required to have a liferaft, have the liferaft serviced annually, have an EPIRB aboard, have lifejackets or flares on their vessels because they will not be fishing. We have approx 10 service stations for these products in the state of Florida alone who's business relies on the commercial fishing industry as part of their livelihood. Also, an example that hits close to home is the Mayport Princess party boat. I started fishing and learned how to offshore bottom fish from Capt. George Strait, owner and operator of the Mayport Princess. Capt. George has been doing this as his career for over 30 years. If the snapper closure were implemented then he would have to shut his entire business down. Since he has been doing this for 30 years he does not have a whole lot to put on a resume and at his age it would be hard to start a new career. He also would not be able to sell his boat because who would want to purchase a party boat if they cannot fish???? While at the SAFMC meeting in Jax earlier in the year there was a gentleman who was in a similar predicament. He is very close to retiring and in the near future looking at selling his commercial fishing license and his boat. If the snapper closure takes place then his commercial fishing permit will not be worth the piece of paper it is written on and no one will want a commercial fishing boat because once again they can't make any money fishing. Capt. George and this commercial fisherman are just two small examples of what this closure will do to people.

As I am a recreational fisherman and do this for a hobby there will be some other economic impacts. I probably spend close to $10,000 a year on fishing and I don't even own a boat. The bait & tackle stores will be seeing less traffic, there will be a lot less fuel purchased (we usually burn 120 gallons per trip), we also purchase close to 100lbs of ice along with plenty of food and drinks for each trip. Not only will this have a huge impact on the fishing related businesses, but also an impact on other items as mentioned. Think about all the tax revenue that will not be coming in because these purchases will not be made any longer. Also, for the people that do own boats that

have regular maintenance done will not be doing so any longer. So now you also have the boat mechanics not receiving work because everyone will be trying to get rid of their boats. Finally the boat manufacturers who are already hurting or already out of business will be shutting their doors because no one will want a new boat if they can't get out to fish. We are in hard economic times right now and this is a prime example of kicking a man while he is down. Just from an economic stand this closure will be detrimental to the economy in an already shaky time.

Tourism, I don't think I even need to go there.

On a personal note, I plan to get married soon and have children. I cannot imaging not being able to take my kids and eventually grandchildren out on our beautiful waters to let them experience their first offshore adventure. All they will hear will be the stories of the glory days when we would go out and catch these magnificent fish. This is something I have looked forward to for a long time and it is about to be taken away from me because of some bad data and bad government. I beg you to please look into the closure the SAFMC is trying to implement and the consequences of doing so. I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this.

Best Regards,
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