UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
(727) 824-5305, FAX (727) 824-5308
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Bonnie Ponwith, Ph.D.
Director, Southeast Fisheries Science Center

FROM: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator

SUBJECT: Request for Review of Amendment 17A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region

Enclosed is a copy of Amendment 17A to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic Region (Amendment 17A) and the integrated draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The DEIS filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on February 26, 2010, and the notice of availability will publish in the *Federal Register* on March 5, 2010. The comment period for the DEIS will end on April 19, 2010. I request the Southeast Fisheries Science Center review Amendment 17A and its associated DEIS, and provide comments in writing before the end of the comment period.

On July 8, 2008, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) was notified that South Atlantic red snapper is undergoing overfishing and is overfished. This determination was based upon a review of the 2008 assessment of this species by the Southeast, Data, Assessment, and Review panel and the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee. In response to the overfished and overfishing determination, the Council has developed Amendment 17A, which would: 1) Establish a rebuilding plan; 2) select a proxy for the fishing mortality rate that will produce the maximum sustainable yield; 3) specify status determination criteria; 4) specify an annual catch limit and accountability measures for red snapper; and 5) implement management measures intended to end overfishing of red snapper in the South Atlantic and prevent future overfishing from occurring.

The Council plans to take final action on the amendment in June 2010, at which time our office will request that the Southeast Fisheries Science Center certify that Amendment 17A and its associated final environmental impact statement are based upon the best scientific information available. Questions regarding this amendment and/or request for review should be directed to Kate Michie at (727) 824-5305, or at Kate.Michie@noaa.gov.

Attachment