Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress, by the year 2015

April 15, 2010

Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D.
Regional Administrator
Southeast Regional Office
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
263 13th Avenue South
Saint Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505

Dear Dr. Crabtree,

I am writing on behalf of the member states of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) to provide the following comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Amendment 17A to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan (Amendment 17A).

While the Commission does not have a fishery management plan for red snapper, we are supportive of restoration of all Atlantic coast stocks. The Commission agrees with the draft amendment's objectives to end overfishing of red snapper, rebuild the red snapper stock, through the use of Annual Catch Limits and Accountability Measures. The Commission also supports the use of the best available science to determine management measures to meet the requirements of the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Some concern has been raised by Commission members about the possibility that large area closures will shift fishing pressure towards species managed exclusively in state waters. Managing such a shift in effort would put further strain on the fiscal resources of some states. The Commission requests that NMFS provide the necessary resources to monitor and manage effort shifting to state water fisheries.

We look forward to continuing to work with the National Marine Fisheries Service on these important issues and thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the DEIS for Amendment 17A.

Sincerely,

John V. O'Shea

John V. O'Shea

cc: ASMFC Commissioners