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Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Decision to Reallocate Red Snapper Hurts American Consumers and Provides False Hope to Recreational Anglers

(NEW ORLEANS) – Today the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council) voted to reallocate several hundred-thousand pounds of red snapper away from the commercial fishing sector to the purely recreational sector. Share the Gulf is coalition of more than 44,000 chefs, restaurateurs, conservationists, seafood suppliers, commercial fishermen and consumers that has opposed the proposal.

“The vast majority of Americans do not own an offshore boat; they access the fishery through their favorite restaurants and grocery stores. This vote erodes their right to this shared American resource and hurts the businesses that provide it to them. Thankfully thousands of chefs, fishermen and seafood lovers made their voice heard or this could have been much worse,” said Stan Harris, CEO of the Louisiana Restaurant Association.

The proposal, known as Amendment 28, has gone through numerous iterations as it has been under consideration by the Gulf Council for years. Currently the red snapper fishery is divided almost 50-50 between the commercial and recreational sectors. Some alternatives considered in Amendment 28 could have shifted millions of pounds of fish and done untold damage to commercial fishermen, the seafood supply chain, restaurants and grocery stores.

“I voted against this because it takes millions of consumer meals off the market while not even providing a full extra day of fishing for recreational anglers. Some on the council were trying to shift millions of pounds of red snapper, so this could have been worse had people not stood up and fought for their right to access the fishery even if they don’t own a boat,” said David Walker, a commercial fisherman from Alabama who also sits on the Gulf Council.

“This was a poor decision by the Gulf Council because it hurts consumers and local businesses while not actually helping fisherman. Recreational management is so broken that this will not give them more than one extra day of fishing. Hopefully, now that this distraction is finished, we can focus on fixing the management system to give private anglers the fishing opportunities they deserve,” said Jason DeLaCruz, owner of Wild Seafood Company in St. Petersburg, Florida.

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