FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Official Statement of the
Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance

In advance of his appearance at tomorrow's House Natural Resources Committee hearing on H.R. 3094, the Gulf States Red Snapper Management Authority Act, Florida charter captain and noted opponent of commercial fishermen Bob Zales submitted testimony characterizing participants in the red snapper Individual Transferrable Quota (ITQ) program as "old time plantation owner(s) who allowed share croppers to farm the land." Zales' full testimony is attached, and a statement signed by a number of commercial fishermen is below:

We are offended by Mr. Zales' attempt to smear hardworking fishermen with ugly labels from the past, but we cannot say we are surprised. Our well-regulated, sustainable, and accountable fishery should be envied by others because it is a model for managing fisheries responsibly, and an example of how much the Magnuson-Stevens Act has improved fishery management. This mischaracterization is an insult not only to the people who have invested wisely and patiently built businesses while helping the red snapper stock to rebound, but also to the many fishermen who make a good living under the ITQ system, and who, unlike sharecroppers, are able to grow their own businesses and purchase quota shares. The debate over Gulf red snapper is highly contentions, but there is absolutely no justification for slurs like this.

Bubba Cochrane, Galveston, Texas, F/V Chelsea Ann
Scott Daggett, Largo, Florida, F/V Angelina
Clyde and Joann Daughtry, Carrabelle, Florida, F/V Dealers Choice
Paul Loughridge, Yankeetown, Florida, F/V Captain Josh
Steve Maisel, Clearwater Beach, Florida, F/V Scorcher
Matthew Tevlin, Indian Shores, Florida, F/V Offshore Account
Jim Zurbrick, Steinhatchee, Florida, F/V Jolly Rogers II

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