

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2015

Kathryn Sullivan, Ph.D.
Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Sullivan:

As the Federal season for red snapper is now closed in the Gulf of Mexico, we write to underscore the importance of this fishery and its economic impact on Florida.

As you know, weather plays a large role in determining when recreational anglers can leave the docks and safely enjoy their time on the water. With the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) allotting only ten days for the 2015 season, we are concerned anglers may have unnecessarily put themselves in harm's way in order to comply with the prescribed time frame. This inflexible schedule does not advocate for boating safety and enjoyment of the waters.

With an already shortened season, we respectfully request you consider all available metrics to ensure fishermen are not being unfairly disadvantaged. Should new data become available to support it, an extended season would provide an opportunity for anglers to safely fish, and would serve as an economic boost to Florida communities where fishing is a way of life.

As the Gulf of Mexico red snapper season is now closed, we respectfully request your prompt attention to the matter.

We also are concerned with NOAA's decision to not open up red snapper fishing in the South Atlantic for 2015. This is especially troubling as the Department is basing this decision without an assessment. Although last year's season only consisted of three weekends, it afforded an opportunity for those coastal communities to capture valuable tourism dollars. As such, we strongly encourage your agency to use all available data to reconsider the closure.



Senator Marco Rubio

Respectfully,



Senator Bill Nelson