



Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 1, 2017

Gulf Commercial Fishermen Express Concerns Over New Red Snapper Bill

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance today issued the following statement in response to introduction of the *REDSNAPPER Act of 2017* (H.R. 3588) by Congressman Garret Graves (R-LA):

We continue to support the Gulf States and federal government working together to develop a viable, long-term, science-based solution to the red snapper challenges in the Gulf of Mexico for private angler fishermen.

While the REDSNAPPER Act of 2017 might be a creative approach to increasing private recreational angler access to Gulf of Mexico red snapper, unfortunately this legislation will prove impractical because the only mechanism to protect the resource and the commercial and federal charter fishing sectors will be to end the new program once too many fish are caught. To truly improve access for recreational fishermen, the bill

needs to hold the private recreational sector to its science-based annual catch limits, while allowing the Gulf States to learn to manage the larger fishing area provided in the bill.

The conservation and management measures in the Magnuson-Stevens Act have helped red snapper rebuild more quickly than anticipated, doubling quotas for all fishermen in the Gulf. Weakening enforcement of quota limits would risk the future of this fishery and could have some severe consequences for our fishing businesses, as well as the seafood suppliers and seafood consumers that depend on us.

We believe the Gulf States should have a chance to succeed while working within a scientifically-justified, conservation-based backstop to protect against potential problems, without having to resort to ending a state's participation in this program. The REDSNAPPER Act of 2017 should include real measures to protect the red snapper stock that we've built businesses on and that private anglers have come to enjoy while the Gulf States figure out how to make this new approach work.

###

Media Contact:

Shareholders' Alliance – Eric Brazer, Deputy Director, 919-451-1971

The Shareholders' Alliance is the largest organization of commercial snapper and grouper fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico. We work hard to ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed so our fishing businesses can thrive and our fishing communities can exist for future generations. We are the harvesters that provide much of the American public with a reliable source of domestically-caught wild Gulf seafood, and we do this through a philosophy that sustainable seafood and profitable fishing businesses depend on healthy fish populations.

www.shareholdersalliance.org

www.facebook.com/GulfAlliance