



Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 12, 2017

Gulf Fishermen to Congress: Protect the Magnuson-Stevens Act

In Senate Testimony, Shareholders' Bubba Cochrane Warns Weakening Fisheries Management Law Would Harm Fishermen, Fishing Communities, Consumers

Washington, D.C. – In testimony to be delivered today before the [U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard](#), Captain Bubba Cochrane of Galveston, TX, a commercial fisherman and President of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance, a member of the [Fishing Communities Coalition](#) (FCC), will urge Congress to preserve and build on the successful track record of the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act* (MSA).

Highlighting the tremendous social and economic benefits of healthy fish stocks, including rebuilding the red snapper population in the Gulf, Cochrane will detail the unprecedented success of MSA and its core principles as Congress moves to reauthorize the nation's landmark fisheries law:

America has set the gold standard for sustainable fisheries because of our commitment to science-based management. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is the system's bipartisan backbone and it is something we should all be proud of. Forty-one stocks have been rebuilt since 2001 and the number of stocks on the overfishing and overfished lists remains near all-time lows.

Thanks to Magnuson-Stevens' science-based conservation requirements and the commercial IFQ (individual fishing quota) program, the red snapper quota for all fishermen in the Gulf has nearly tripled in the last 10 years, from 5 million pounds to nearly 14 million pounds.

Cochrane will pointedly address calls by certain elements of the recreational fishing community to abandon rebuilding plans in the name of "flexibility," an action that would effectively nullify MSA.

[A]s the U.S. Department of Commerce admits, bypassing conservation measures and science-based management will result in the recreational sector substantially exceeding its annual catch limit and delay rebuilding the stock by as many as six years. We support the Gulf States and federal government working together to develop a sustainable, accountable, science-based solution to the Gulf of Mexico private angler fishing challenges.

We – the nation's fishermen, seafood suppliers, seafood-consuming public and Congressional leaders – have an obligation to protect the gains we've made and

the recoveries we've experienced under the last 40 years of Magnuson-Stevens. We owe it to ourselves, our fishing communities and the next generation of fishermen to pass on a natural resource legacy that ensures sustainable seafood and sustainable public access for all Americans for today and future generations.

The Gulf's fight is everyone's fight. It's a fight to put the long-term supply of fish first, to commit to science-based management, to insist on accountability across all sectors, to invest in the future generation, and to ultimately defend the pillar of our nation's fisheries – the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Click [here](#) to watch the hearing at 2:30 p.m. ET.

###

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