



May 19, 2020

Honorable S. Reed Morian, Chairman  
Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission,  
4200 Smith School Road,  
Austin, TX 78744

**Regarding: Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's Proposed Changes to Southern  
Flounder Regulations in Texas State Waters**

Chairman Morian and Members of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's proposed changes to the recreational and commercial season dates and minimum length requirements for Southern Flounder (*Paralichthys lethostigma*). Given recent population declines in Texas and throughout the range of the southern flounder, CSF supports these proposed changes in an effort to rebuild the southern flounder fishery.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become one of the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

Southern flounder populations have been declining across their North American range. Though many hypotheses have been proposed to explain this decline, fishing pressure, especially during the fall spawning period, is widely considered to be a primary contributor. The proposed increase in the minimum length requirement to 15" and closure of the southern flounder season during their fall spawning run, which would apply to both commercial and recreational anglers, are necessary measures to assist with rebuilding the southern flounder fishery in Texas. By implementing the proposed regulations, Texas will join Alabama in establishing similar regulations and taking a proactive approach to addressing southern flounder population declines in the Gulf.

CSF supports state fish and wildlife agencies as the entities best equipped to make science-based fisheries and wildlife management decisions. With that, we support the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's data-driven approach to ensure the long-term viability of this resource by increasing the minimum length requirement to 15" and protecting the southern flounder population during their spawning run, while also maintaining southern flounder angling opportunities throughout the remainder of the year.

Thank you again for your time and consideration on these matters. If you have questions or would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Keene". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kent Keene

Lower Midwestern States Coordinator | Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
[kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:kkeene@congressionalsportsmen.org) | 202-430-0655