



**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF SPORTSMEN'S  
CAUCUSES**

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**PRESIDENT**

Senator Robin Webb, KY

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Representative Mark Neuman,  
AK

**SECRETARY**

Representative Brandon Phelps,  
IL

**MEMBERS**

Senator Bill Heath, GA

Delegate Wendell Beitzel, MD

Representative Sal Esquivel, OR

Representative Candy Ezzell, NM

Representative Herb Frierson, MS

Representative Marc Gergely, PA

Representative Craig Miner, CT

Representative Brian White, SC

Kevin Anson  
Chairman  
Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council  
2203 North Louis Avenue  
Suite 1100  
Tampa, Florida 33607

RE: Reef Fish Amendment 40 – Sector Separation for the Recreational Red Snapper Fishery

October 20, 2014

Dear Chairman Anson:

On behalf of the Executive Council of the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), and as Co-Chairs of the Mississippi and Kentucky Legislative Sportsmen's Caucuses, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposed Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. NASC is comprised of 44 state legislative sportsmen's caucuses, including those of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas.

We are disappointed with the current direction of the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council (Council) as it relates to the recreational red snapper fishery. Rather than addressing the failed federal management of the recreational sector as a whole, Amendment 40 would provide disproportionate relief for a few, while ignoring the millions of private recreational anglers that fish Gulf of Mexico waters each year. Council members take an oath to manage our fisheries resources "...for the greatest overall benefit of the Nation...being careful to balance competing private or regional interests...and always aware and protective of the public interest in those resources." As it currently stands, Amendment 40 is very contentious, and we fail to see how proceeding with sector separation in the recreational red snapper fishery could be considered the greatest benefit to the nation, attempting to balance competing private interests, or protecting the public interest in the resource.

Sector separation isn't a solution at all. It's simply an attempt to treat one symptom of a much larger problem - inept federal management of mixed sector species in the Gulf of Mexico. The recreational sector is fundamentally different than the commercial sector in that recreational anglers simply seek opportunities to go fishing and are not focused on the number of pounds available for harvest. Yet, the National Marine Fisheries Service continues to force this poundage-based model of commercial fisheries management on the recreational sector. That is why the ultimate solution lies with giving more management authority to our state natural resource agencies, which are more experienced and make better use of current data to balance species conservation with public use and enjoyment of the resource.

Ultimately, we all agree we need a different approach to managing the recreational red snapper fishery. The shortest recreational season in history while we have the healthiest population of red snapper ever recorded is proof that the current approach is fatally flawed. It's disheartening that the only solution currently being pursued by the Council is to divide recreational anglers into different sectors, and it fails to meet the expectations of a fisheries management council as established by Congress.

For this reason, we urge you to vote against sector separation by voting for Alternative 1 when you take action on Amendment 40.

Sincerely,

Representative Herb Frierson (MS)

Senator Robin Webb (KY)

**The Sportsmen's Voice in State Capitols**

110 North Carolina Avenue, SE ~ Washington, DC 20003  
202-543-6850 (p) ~ 202-543-6853 (f) ~ [www.sportsmenslink.org](http://www.sportsmenslink.org)

CC:  
Dr. Roy Crabtree, NMFS Southeast Regional Administrator  
Doug Gregory, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council