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Dear Chairman Cupka:

We are disappointed, but understand the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's decision to pull the commercial snapper grouper catch share option out of Amendment 21, especially with all of the complex, controversial, and legally-mandated actions you must focus on right now. The discussion surrounding your decision was encouraging, as it sounds like there is a lot of continued support for a commercial snapper grouper catch share.

We would like to see management that meets the Council's and fishermen's goals of preventing overfishing and reducing bycatch, improving data, and increasing the safety of and profitability for fishermen. We're concerned that Amendment 21, as it stands now, will not meet these goals.

We understand that catch shares are controversial right now. Most fishery regulations are. Catch shares were controversial in the Gulf of Mexico, but now they're an accepted practice for commercial fisheries because they've improved management and the lives of many fishermen.

If possible, we have several recommendations:

- Identify and group public comment by: 1) which fishery or fisheries are represented (snapper grouper, mackerel, dolphin, etc.), 2) which sectors are represented (commercial, for-hire, or private angler) 3) other (restaurants, coastal businesses, individual, organization, etc.). This might help to break out the approximately 700 permit holders from the rest of the voices weighing in.
- Allow Council and/or NMFS staff to continue to work with interested fishermen to build upon existing catch share design options to help show other fishermen how a catch share might work for them.
- Work on improved data collection and monitoring for our fishery. Vessel monitoring systems, electronic reporting, and/or video monitoring are desperately needed. Implementation of these as a part of 18A or another amendment nearing approval is a step in the right direction.

Those of us that support catch shares for the commercial snapper grouper fishery will continue to reach out to our fellow fishermen to promote sustainable fishing and catch shares. Many fishermen are being misinformed about catch shares and still have a lot of questions. We will continue to share fact-based information about catch shares and improve upon the draft catch share design options we've already worked on to help show the Council and other fishermen see what a catch share might look like for the fishery.

We look forward to working with the Council toward a commercial snapper grouper catch share in the near future.

Thanks for all of your hard work.

Sincerely,

Matt Ruby, Interim President (Little River, SC)

Chris Conklin, Treasurer (Murrells Inlet, SC)

Phil Conklin, Vice President (Murrells Inlet, SC)

Larry Jones, Secretary (Cayce, SC)

David Thomas, Board Member (St. Matthews, SC)

Scott Vaeth, Board Member (Key Largo, FL)

Pete Boehm, Board Member (Key Largo, FL)