



4449 Lakeside Drive, Little River, SC 29566

(843) 213-7240 / [info@southerncatch.com](mailto:info@southerncatch.com) / [www.SouthernCatch.com](http://www.SouthernCatch.com)

February 14, 2011

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director  
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council  
4055 Faber Place Drive, Suite 201  
N. Charleston, SC 29405

Re: Comments in support of SAFMC Snapper Grouper Amendment 21

Dear Mr. Mahood,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on Snapper Grouper Amendment 21. I'm writing on behalf of the South Atlantic Fishermen's Association, a new and growing organization made up of fishermen and seafood lovers from North Carolina to the Florida Keys.

We work to protect the Southeast's fishing heritage by advocating for sustainable year-round fishing rules, collecting better fishery science, and connecting consumers and businesses with fishermen, to improve the abundance and accessibility of local seafood. We also want to pass our fishing heritage on to future generations.

Current fishing regulations are creating a fishing derby that is killing the industry. The derby is also increasing bycatch, which needlessly wastes valuable fish. We are struggling to get by and we need real, lasting solutions. Current regulations must change.

We support Snapper Grouper Amendment 21 because it's the best solution for our businesses, our fishery and our heritage. It also specifically works to achieve several of our organization's goals, including improving access to year-round fishing and improving science.

Additionally, many of our board members have had the opportunity to meet with fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico's commercial catch share program. The business benefits Gulf fishermen describe are exactly what our struggling industry needs: flexibility to fish when prices are high; flexibility to run fewer, more efficient trips; and the ability to buy, sell or lease shares when they want to fish more or need to leave the fishery.

We ask that the Council add details to Amendment 21, including allocation formulas, so that we can truly understand how the catch share would impact our businesses. We also support a referendum with a weighted vote based on substantial participation, as the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery used, so that full-time fishermen can vote on something so critical to their livelihoods.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with the Council in the future.

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)