

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 67

BY SENATOR ALLAIN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the Congress of the United States to pass legislation or to adopt policies allowing Louisiana to manage the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery out to two hundred nautical miles off the coast of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, in recent years, the Gulf of Mexico has contained the highest total allowable catch of red snapper in decades, but in 2016, anglers experienced the shortest recreational fishing season to date, lasting less than two weeks; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has overseen the Gulf recreational red snapper fishery for nearly four decades; today, federal management systems attempt to regulate red snapper fishing by the pound with tools specifically designed to manage the commercial sector, despite the fact that federal data collection systems are incapable of accounting to such a level of specificity for recreational harvests; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has, moreover, neglected to use recent data to provide meaningful guidelines and requirements for a systematic reallocation of federal fisheries; except for minor adjustments to account for errors in its own data collection system, the Gulf red snapper fishery allocation is based on highly suspect data from 1979-1986 and has remained unchanged since 1991; and

WHEREAS, the federal government is currently promoting a management strategy to privatize the Gulf red snapper fishery; approximately fifty percent of the fishery is already held by private businesses, while another twenty percent has been designated to be sold; shares of this public resource have also been given away for free, based on a commercial operator's past catch history; and

WHEREAS, because of extraordinarily remiss requirements in its conflict of interest guidelines, the federal fisheries management system allows commercial operators who already own red snapper shares or who may be gifted shares to serve on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and to cast votes on issues that will result in direct financial benefit for themselves; and

WHEREAS, by creating a prohibitive environment for anglers and ethical issues among user groups and stakeholders, the federal government has proved itself incapable of properly managing the red snapper fishery in the Gulf of Mexico, and all five states along the Gulf Coast have increasingly implemented regulations and seasons that are not consistent with the federal management plan; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies, including some funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, indicate that the greatest economic engine in the Gulf reef fishery is the recreational angling sector, and federal control should be relinquished to the Gulf states, which depend most on this vital public resource.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to pass legislation or adopt policies allowing Louisiana to manage the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishery out to two hundred nautical miles off the coast of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES