UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PROGRAM PLANNING AND INTEGRATION
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

To All Interested Government Agencies and Public Groups:

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental review has been performed on the following action.

TITLE: Environmental Assessment for a Framework Action to set Red Snapper Quotas for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Fishery [RIN 0648-BE91]

LOCATION: Gulf of Mexico

SUMMARY: The subject environmental assessment (EA) analyzed the effects of a range of alternatives identified in the framework action to the Gulf of Mexico reef fish resources fishery management plan to modify the quotas for the harvest of red snapper. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has submitted the subject framework action to NOAA Fisheries for agency review under procedures of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. An update stock assessment was reviewed by the Scientific and Statistical Committee, which determined the allowable biological catch (ABC) could be increased. Management measures considered in this EA would adjust the red snapper ABC from 11.0 million pounds (mp) whole weight to those indicated in the table. The table provides the quotas, ABCs, and annual catch targets (ACT) in mp whole weight. The commercial and recreational sector quotas would be based on the current 51 percent commercial and 49 percent recreational allocation. The recreational ACT is set 20 percent below the recreational quota, based on a rule effective in April 2015.

Year	ABC	Total Quota	Commercial Quota	Recreational Quota	Recreational ACT
2015	14.30	14.30	7.29	7.01	5.606
2016	13.96	13.96	7.12	6.84	5.472
2017+	13.74	13.74	7.01	6.73	5.384

The environmental assessment analyzes the impacts of the proposed actions. By itself, this framework action is not controversial because the quota will be increased. The ABC is sufficiently less than the overfishing limit such that the probability of overfishing is minimal.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL: Roy E. Crabtree, Ph.D., Regional Administrator, Southeast Regional Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701, (727) 824-5305, FAX (727) 824-5308.

The environmental review process led us to conclude that these actions will not have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement was not prepared. A copy of the finding of no significant impact (FONSI), including the environmental assessment, is enclosed for your information.

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Although NOAA is not soliciting comments on this completed EA/FONSI we will consider any comments submitted that would assist us in preparing future NEPA documents. Please submit any written comments to the Responsible Official named above.

Sincerely,

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Patricia A. Montanio
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure