

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0902

Honorable Gina M. Raimondo  
Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

On June 8, 2023, the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council took final action to update red snapper private recreational data calibrations for Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi, developed by the Gulf States and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Science and Technology.

Fishing for red snapper is a daily revenue generator for America's small business. Charter captains, bait shops, hotels, restaurants, towns, and counties are the beneficiaries of the thousands of anglers who enjoy fishing for red snapper.

In 2021, the results of an unprecedented \$12 million study known as the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC), found that there were around three times as many red snapper in the Gulf than the most recent stock assessment estimated and on which previous management guidelines were based. The GRSC, which congress has funded for the last three years, provides the information needed for the fish managers to make the best management decision based on sound science that balances access and conservation. In 2021, the absolute abundance of red snapper in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico was estimated at 110 million fish.<sup>1</sup>

Currently, recreational red snapper landings are being tracked using multiple data collection programs, including the federal Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP), the State Reef Fish Survey (SRFS), and other state surveys. Annual quotas are set based on MRIP data, but landings are tracked using the state surveys. The calibrations approved by the Council improve upon those currently in effect and, if implemented, would better express the relationship between recreational red snapper landings observed in the state data programs and MRIP estimates.

This new framework would appropriately increase the quota for Gulf of Mexico anglers and stimulate the economy. We encourage you to approve this rule as soon as possible so it is in place for the 2024 fishing season.

Sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stores/d03212c07af94ac79a98c9c3a210270e>



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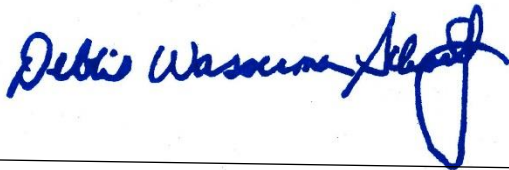
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Cory Mills  
Member of Congress



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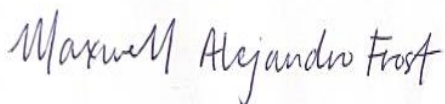
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