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March 10, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

Congratulations on your recent appointment and thank you for your willingness to enter public service during this important time in our nation's history.

I write today in strong opposition to Amendment 59 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Snapper-Grouper Fishery of the South Atlantic. This ill-conceived proposed rule from NOAA, put forth in the final days of the prior administration, is inconsistent with the decisions of the experts at the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council and will have devastating effects on my Congressional district's citizenry and economy.

Recreational fishing is big business in Coastal Georgia. The problematic trend of ever shorter fishing seasons for red snapper is hurting fishing tourism during a time when red snapper have never been more abundant. The disconnect between what anglers on the water can see with their own eyes and federal management of the red snapper fishery has persisted for too long. The further constraints of Amendment 59 with a closure of recreational bottom fishing for 55 species from December through February in waters that my constituents and tourists to my district want to access are not tenable and must be rejected.

By NOAA's own estimates, the agency's current data is off by between 30 – 40% and is unsuitable for management use. The South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council refused to take management action based upon the flawed data, which was the responsible decision by the applicable federal management body.

As a Secretarial Amendment, the action undertaken in Amendment 59 circumvents that responsible decision and replaces it with unilateral action by the prior Secretary of Commerce. The Amendment process deviated from the norms of federal fisheries management in multiple ways because it was rushed through by the outgoing previous administration.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any further information regarding Amendment 59 and to let me know when you can join me for some fishing.

Sincerely,



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress