



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

May 4, 2017

Mr. Benjamin Friedman
Acting Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Acting Administrator Friedman,

We are writing regarding this week's announcement that the 2017 Gulf of Mexico red snapper fishing season will be nearly a week shorter than last year's season. For the anglers, boat captains, and related industries dependent on access to this fishery, this is deeply concerning.

According to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the 2017 Gulf of Mexico red snapper federal season will be limited to just three days for recreational fishermen and 49 days for charter fishermen. We also understand that NMFS is likely to keep the South Atlantic closed for another season as well.

In years past, we have raised concern that setting a rigid fishing season of consecutive days may put anglers in harm's way due to Florida's unpredictable and frequent summer storms. We continue to believe that allowing more flexibility in the season to accommodate dangerous weather would help fishermen avoid hazardous conditions.

Once again, we ask that you consider incorporating all available reliable data to ensure anglers can safely fish for an appropriate season, which contributes valuable tourism revenue to coastal economies and ensures access to this public resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson".

Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marco Rubio".

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator