



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## SECOND REFERENDUM FOR THE GULF OF MEXICO RED SNAPPER INDIVIDUAL FISHING QUOTA (IFQ) PROGRAM APPROVED

NOAA Fisheries Service announces the second referendum for the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper IFQ Program has passed by a majority vote.

NOAA Fisheries Service Southeast Regional Office (SERO) conducted the first referendum in early 2004. The results of the first referendum supported preparation of a Red Snapper IFQ plan amendment. On January 17, 2006, SERO initiated the second referendum by mailing each eligible voter a ballot specifying the number of votes (weighting) each voter was assigned. In this second referendum, fishermen qualified to vote were asked to decide if the Red Snapper IFQ Amendment developed by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) should be submitted to the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary). SERO mailed out 167 ballots and associated explanatory information, via certified mail return receipt requested. One hundred fifty seven eligible voters (94 percent) received their ballots as evidenced by the return receipts received at SERO. One hundred and forty ballots (84 percent) were returned to SERO by the deadline date of February 21, 2006. One hundred and six ballots totaling 8,205,677 "yes" votes (87 percent) were received supporting submission of the Red Snapper IFQ Amendment to the Secretary. Thirty four ballots totaling 1,235,069 "no" votes (13 percent) were received that did not support submission of the amendment.

NOAA Fisheries Service will present the results of the second referendum to the Council at its March 20-23, 2006, meeting in Mobile, Alabama. At that time, the Council may vote to submit the amendment to the Secretary. It should be noted, however, that even though both referendums passed, the Secretary is not mandated to enact an IFQ program.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes. This and other news releases are available on the SERO homepage at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

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