



OCT 18 2011

Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we enclose for your review the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for a Generic Annual Catch Limits/Accountability Measures Amendment for the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Red Drum, Reef Fish, Shrimp, and Coral and Coral Reefs Fishery Management Plans (FMPs).

This FEIS is prepared pursuant to NEPA to assess the environmental impacts associated with NOAA proceeding with regulatory action being considered by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council), which addresses Annual Catch Limits (ACLs), Accountability Measures (AMs) and associated parameters for stocks managed by the Council, along with initial specifications of ACLs that may be changed under a framework procedure for specifying an ACL. The FEIS evaluates: (1) Transferring management of selected stocks to other agencies and identifying stocks that do not need federal management; (2) establishing and modifying species complexes to more efficiently manage the stocks; (3) establishing standardized methodologies to set ACLs through control rules, and providing a procedure that will allow timely modifications to ACLs; (4) establishing initial specifications of ACLs for Gulf of Mexico federally-managed species; and (5) establishing AMs that ensure harvests do not exceed ACLs in the long-term.

Additional copies of the FEIS may be obtained electronically from the Responsible Program Official identified below. The document is also accessible electronically from the Southeast Regional Offices Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, or the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

NOAA is not required to respond to comments received during the agency's 30 day comment period as a result of the issuance of the FEIS. However, comments received by **November 28, 2011** will be reviewed and considered for their impact on issuance of a record of decision (ROD). Please send comments to the responsible official identified below. The ROD will be made available publicly following final agency action on or after **November 28, 2011**.

Responsible Program Official:

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Sincerely,



Paul N. Doremus, Ph.D.
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure

