



Dear Reviewer:

In accordance with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), we enclose for your review the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Recreational Red Snapper Sector Separation Amendment 40 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico.

This DEIS 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. The purpose of this action is to define distinct private angling and federal for-hire components of the recreational red snapper sector, allocate red snapper resources between the components of the recreational sector to increase the stability for the for-hire component, provide a basis for increased flexibility in future management of the recreational sector, and minimize the chance for recreational quota overruns which could jeopardize the rebuilding of the red snapper stock. The DEIS analyzes the impacts of establishing a private angling and federal for-hire component to the recreational sector of the reef fish fishery, establishing a baseline allocation between the federal for-hire and private angling components, and establishing recreational season closure provisions for each component.

Additional copies of the DEIS may be obtained electronically from the Responsible Program Official identified below through Peter Hood at [peter.hood@noaa.gov](mailto:peter.hood@noaa.gov). The document is also accessible electronically from the Southeast Regional Office Web site at <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov>, or the e-Rulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Written comments should be submitted through mail or via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0107](http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2014-0107). Click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. All comments received are part of the public record and will generally be posted to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments. Attachments to electronic comments will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only. Written comments submitted during the agency's 45-day public comment period must be received by October 20, 2014. When submitting mailed comments, include the following document identifier:  
**Comments on Amendment 40.**

Responsible Program Official:

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Sincerely,

for Patricia A. Montanio  
NOAA NEPA Coordinator

Enclosure