



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Court Rules In Favor of Fishermen

(Galveston, TX): A U.S. District Court judge ruled today that charter/for-hire fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico have the right to separate themselves from a failing recreational management regime and develop fishery management plans tailored to their businesses.

Amendment 40, also known as Sector Separation, was developed and approved by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council in 2015 after years of analysis and input from the public. It allows for separate management of the charter/for hire sector and the private angler sector in order to increase flexibility and “reign in the consistent overages in the recreational sector,” according to the Court determination. The Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) filed suit to undermine the public process for approving Amendment 40; the Court ruled against CCA on all counts.

“This is a victory for fishermen and for the majority of the American public who can’t afford to buy a boat to catch red snapper. Sector separation gives these guys the chance to come up with a management plan that works for their businesses and their customers, and is the best chance for American anglers that access their red snapper via the charter fleet. Charter/for-hire fishermen deserve the opportunity to shape their future, much like what the commercial fishermen did when we built the quota system that improved the fishery and gave consumers access to red snapper 365 days a year.”

Jason DeLaCruz, Vice President, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance.

“This is the first instance of a specific allocation to the Charterboat industry in the world, and it lays the foundation for putting sustainable management plans in place for the entire recreational fishery.”

Shane Cantrell, Executive Director, Charter Fisherman’s Association.

“The ruling on Amendment 40 by Judge Milazzo helps preserve access to red snapper for charter/for-hire captains and their customers. It validates years of work that will improve fisheries management and establishes a path to the future for the recreational fishing in the Gulf.”

Steve Tomeny, charter and commercial fisherman, Port Fourchon, Louisiana.

“This should be a wake-up call to the CCA. They’re undermining the public process, misrepresenting their membership, and wasting hundreds of thousands (maybe millions) of their members’ dollars in frivolous lawsuits. If they spent this much time and money actually working on real solutions for the fishermen they “represent,” we might actually have a recreational fishery that’s managed properly.”

Buddy Guindon, Executive Director, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance.

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