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Gulf Commercial Fishermen Celebrate Capitol Hill Ocean Week 2019

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance today issued the following statement on the start of the 2019 Capitol Hill Ocean Week:

The 19th year of [Capitol Hill Ocean Week](#) has kicked off in Washington, D.C. For nearly two decades, this ocean celebration has brought together national and global stakeholders to address pressing science, management and conservation issues. It's a chance for commercial fishermen, ocean explorers, seafood suppliers (and seafood lovers), our Congressional leaders and other stakeholders to come together and celebrate all that our nation's waters have to offer... and ensure the protection of our marine resources for generations to come.

Commercial fishing and seafood production is an economic engine in the United States. In 2017, our nation's commercial fishing industry landed nearly [10 billion pounds of seafood](#) – a [25% increase since 2010](#). In 2016 (the most recent federal data available), the U.S. commercial fishing and seafood industry [generated](#) almost \$40 billion in income and over \$144 billion in sales all the while supporting 1.2 million jobs. Hundreds of millions of American citizens get to enjoy their access to high quality, responsibly-harvested, American seafood because small businesses like mine are profitable, successful, and most importantly, sustainable.

Sustainability is as critical to fish as it is to fishermen. The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act – the mainstay of our federal fishery management system – has been truly effective at protecting fish, fishermen, and fishing communities. The evidence of its success is clear; the number of “overfished” fish stocks managed in the United States reached an [all-time low](#) in 2017 while 44 fish stocks have been declared “rebuilt” since 2000. Here in the Gulf of Mexico, red snapper quotas for all fishermen have [more than tripled](#) in the last 15 years or so and private recreational anglers are seeing more access to red snapper than they have seen in the last decade.

Commercial fishermen and the people that help get fish to your plate are the entrepreneurial backbone of America, and we are proud to have our country support us, our businesses, our communities, and our livelihoods. We are doing our part to strengthen the nation's seafood industry and reduce the country's estimated [\\$14 billion seafood deficit](#) while also keeping an eye towards future generations of fishermen, seafood suppliers, and seafood lovers.



Captain Bubba Cochran

*President, Gulf of Mexico Reef Shareholders' Alliance
Galveston, Texas*

Captain Bubba Cochran fishes out of his homeport in Galveston, Texas on his boat the f/v Chelsea Ann. He has been fishing for as long as he can remember, starting out on a charter boat when he was 17. Fishing commercially in the charter off-season, Bubba eventually became a full-time commercial fisherman. In his role as President, he supports and provides leadership to both the Shareholders' Alliance and [Gulf Wild](#). He is passionate about the sustainability of Gulf fisheries and works to protect the heritage of fishing for his family, especially his son, Conner.



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The Shareholders' Alliance is the largest organization of commercial snapper and grouper fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico. We work hard to ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed so our fishing businesses can thrive and our fishing communities can exist for future generations. We are the harvesters that provide much of the American public with a reliable source of domestically-caught wild Gulf seafood, and we do this through a philosophy that sustainable seafood and profitable fishing businesses depend on healthy fish populations.

www.shareholdersalliance.org