



The Problem: The federal government has repeatedly struggled to assess the number of Red Snapper in the Gulf of Mexico and the overall health of the Red Snapper stock while failing to adequately estimate the number of fish caught, resulting in drastically shortened Red Snapper seasons. As a result of this lack of accurate information, last year's Red Snapper season was only 9 days. This year's season could be even shorter.

The Solution: *The Red Snapper Regulatory Reform Act* (H.R. 981) addresses the biggest problems contributing to the shortened Red Snapper seasons and gives more authority to the Gulf States. The bill has four major provisions:

1. Repeals inflexible quota system for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper fishery
 - a. Repeals section 407(d) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which sets mandatory, inflexible quotas for commercial and recreational fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico
2. Creates jurisdictional parity among the five Gulf States
 - a. Recognizes the 9 nautical mile water boundary for all five state jurisdictions in the Gulf of Mexico. Currently, Texas and Florida maintain a state territorial water boundary of 9 nautical miles while Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama have a 3 nautical mile boundary.
3. Improves stock assessments and data collection activities
 - a. Shifts stock assessment responsibilities from the National Marine Fisheries Services to the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission and directs funds to be made available from NOAA for the Commission to carry out these activities and requires the following from these assessments:

- i. Must incorporate fisheries survey information collected by university researchers
 - ii. Must incorporate fisheries survey information collected on and around natural and artificial reefs
 - iii. Must employ a transparency assessment process that includes stakeholder input
- 4. Updates processes and qualifications for Gulf Council appointees
 - a. Provides for a more representative distribution of voting members on the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and allows the governors of Gulf states to appoint Council members instead of the Secretary of Commerce to ensure that Council members are truly representative of local interests