

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary of Commerce  
United States Department of Commerce  
Washington, DC

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

On behalf of the Gulf Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance (Shareholders' Alliance), representing hardworking commercial grouper and snapper fishermen and seafood suppliers across the Gulf of America (Gulf) and beyond, we extend our sincere congratulations on your appointment as United States Secretary of Commerce. Your leadership in American enterprise, economic growth, and free-market values is deeply respected, and we appreciate your dedication to strengthening industries that drive our nation's economy.

For nearly 20 years, the Shareholders' Alliance has been a steadfast advocate for the Gulf's commercial fishermen, ensuring that those who work the water have a strong voice in shaping the policies that impact their livelihoods while growing the supply of American-caught seafood that sustains businesses and feeds families across the country. Founded by dedicated commercial fishermen who recognized the need for fair representation and industry-driven solutions, our organization has fought to strengthen the seafood industry, protect working waterfronts, and champion policies that support free enterprise and job creation. We remain committed to preserving and growing commercial fishing - one of America's oldest and most essential industries - so that it continues to thrive for generations to come.

Commercial fishermen are the backbone of America's food supply and a driving force behind strong, blue-collar job creation. Every day, we rise before dawn, brave the elements, and put in the kind of honest, hands-on work that keeps our nation fed with a healthy, sustainable source of domestic protein. Our industry supports thousands of small businesses - boat builders, seafood processors, restaurants, and countless others - all contributing to an economy that rewards hard work, self-reliance, and ingenuity. More than just harvesting seafood, we power industries, sustain coastal communities, and uphold a proud American tradition of perseverance and productivity that has defined this nation since its founding.

As the federal agency responsible for managing our nation's fisheries, NOAA - alongside our Regional Fishery Management Council system - plays a crucial role in ensuring the long-term success of our commercial fishing businesses and the stability of America's seafood supply. By growing our nation's fish stocks and implementing fair, science-based regulations, NOAA's work directly impacts the ability of hardworking commercial fishermen like us to operate our businesses, support our families, and contribute to the U.S. economy. Additionally, a strong and highly functional Regional Fishery Management Council ensures that commercial fishermen have a voice in shaping the regulations that affect our livelihoods, fostering a system where industry expertise and responsible management go hand in hand. In fact, without the work of these entities, it would not be possible to manage America's fishery resources in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

A well-managed commercial fishing industry not only sustains coastal jobs but also strengthens national food security, reduces reliance on foreign imports, and upholds the principles of responsible resource stewardship—values that align with the ideals of economic freedom and American self-sufficiency. As we look to the future, we encourage policies that recognize the vital contributions of our industry and ensure that NOAA and our Regional Fishery Management Councils remain a strong partner in fostering growth, innovation, and opportunity for America's fishing communities.

As you begin your tenure, we look forward to working with you and other business leaders who recognize the importance of American industries that create jobs, sustain families, and contribute to our national prosperity. By working together, we can advance policies that strengthen the commercial fishing industry and protect the economic vitality of working waterfronts across the country.

Congratulations again on this well-deserved appointment. We wish you continued success and look forward to working with you in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric Brazer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "E" and "B".

Eric Brazer  
Deputy Director  
Gulf Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance  
Galveston, Texas

cc: Vice Admiral Nancy Hann, Deputy Under Secretary for Operations, NOAA  
Emily Menashes, Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator for NOAA Fisheries, NOAA Fisheries  
Erik Noble, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, NOAA  
Laura Grimm, Chief of Staff, NOAA