

The Honorable Rick Scott
United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Ashley Moody
United States Senate
Washington, DC

June 10, 2025

Dear Senator Scott and Senator Moody,

Florida's commercial and charter fishing industry writes to you today to ask for your help protecting Florida's leadership and representation on the Gulf Fishery Management Council (Gulf Council). Specifically, we urge you to request that United States Secretary of Commerce Lutnick appoint Dr. Mike Allen to the Florida "Other" seat on the Gulf Council in 2025 – a seat currently held by Dr. Tom Frazer of the University of South Florida whose term expires this year. Doing so will support Florida's blue economy, maintain Florida's scientific leadership on the Gulf Council, and facilitate the priorities for commercial seafood production set forth by President Trump in his recent Executive Order (EO) *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*.

Problem: Florida Risks Losing Opportunity.

Losing this Florida seat will be disruptive for Florida businesses.

- Florida's commercial and charter fishing sector is a vital part of the state's economy, supporting thousands of jobs and generating billions in economic impact each year. Losing this seat would reduce these valuable business voices on the Gulf Council, weakening Florida's competitive edge in the seafood and charter fishing industries, and potentially disrupting the Florida businesses, families, and coastal communities that rely on a stable and thriving marine economy.

Losing this Florida seat will impede Florida's leadership.

- Florida has long been recognized as a national leader in marine science and fisheries management. Losing this seat would significantly diminish Florida's influence in setting

fisheries policy, reducing the state's ability to advocate for science-based management and fair regulatory frameworks that reflect the unique ecological/economic conditions of our waters.

Losing this Florida seat will fracture Florida's balanced representation.

- For more than two decades, Florida has maintained one of the most balanced and representative delegations on the Gulf Council, with experts from commercial, recreational, and scientific backgrounds. Removing this seat would disrupt that balance, potentially skewing decision-making in favor of states with narrower perspectives and priorities that may not align with the broader interests of the Florida's commercial and charter fishing sectors.

Losing this Florida seat will mean a net loss for science.

- Florida is home to some of the nation's leading marine scientists and research institutions, whose work has been foundational in improving stock assessments and developing sound management strategies. Transferring this seat to a state that is unlikely to prioritize scientific representation would undermine the quality and credibility of Gulf Council recommendations, risking long-term impacts on the health of the Gulf's fisheries and the economic stability of the communities that depend on them.

Losing this Florida seat will impair the Gulf Council's ability to implement the recent seafood EO.

- The recent EO *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness* emphasizes the need for high-quality, science-driven fisheries management to strengthen the domestic seafood supply chain. Losing this Florida seat on the Gulf Council would undermine this effort, reducing the Gulf Council's capacity to leverage the state's unmatched data collection, research, and scientific expertise at a critical moment for America's seafood industry.

Solution: Maintain Florida's Leadership and Representation.

Maintaining this Florida seat will support Florida's blue economy.

- Preserving this seat ensures that the unique economic interests of Florida's commercial and charter fishing industries are consistently represented, safeguarding thousands of jobs and billions in economic impact. This critical voice on the Gulf Council helps protect the stability and growth of Florida's blue economy, ensuring the long-term viability of the state's fisheries.

Maintaining this Florida seat will ensure Florida drives science-based fisheries management.

- Florida is home to world-class marine scientists whose work is vital to accurate stock assessments and responsible harvest strategies. Keeping this seat within Florida maintains a science-driven approach to fisheries management, aligning policy decisions with the latest research and data.

Maintaining this Florida seat will maintain Florida representation.

- Florida is known for providing a balanced and representative delegation on the Gulf Council, representing commercial, recreational, and scientific perspectives. Preserving this seat in Florida will ensure that Florida's broad and varied interests continue to be effectively represented, supporting fair and comprehensive management decisions with wide support.

Maintaining this Florida seat will support American Seafood Competitiveness.

- With unmatched expertise in fisheries research and data collection, Florida plays a critical role in enhancing the quality and reliability of domestic seafood production. Retaining this seat will help the Gulf Council meet the goals of the recent EO *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*, strengthening the U.S. seafood industry and reducing reliance on foreign imports.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, retaining Florida's "Other" seat on the Gulf Council is essential to maintaining Florida's leadership in fisheries management, preserving its balanced and science-driven representation, and supporting the economic stability of Florida's commercial and charter fishing industries. We respectfully urge you to champion this critical issue, ensuring that Florida remains at the forefront of fisheries science and policy, in alignment with the broader goals of American seafood competitiveness.

We therefore urge you to recommend Dr. Allen's appointment to the Gulf Council to Secretary Lutnick.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to Florida's fishing communities.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

 Adrienne Johnson Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association Fishing Industry Trade Association Tallahassee, FL	  Alexis Meschelle Organized Fishermen of Florida Commercial Fisherman Cortez, FL	Alicia Paul Libra's Love Charters LLC F/V Long Shot & F/V Big Shot Commercial Fisherman Panama City Beach, FL
Allen Staples F/V 100 Proof Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	 Amy Wirtz Pelican Point Seafood Fish House Tarpon Springs, FL	Andrew G. Gude Retired, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cedar Key, FL
Andy Lynn Lynn Brothers Seafood Fish House St. Marks, FL	Anna Woods Woody's Fisheries Commercial Fisherman Perry, FL	Benjamin Barbee Stelluna LLC F/V Stelluna & F/V Sweet Jody Charter/For-Hire Santa Rosa Beach, FL

Bill D'Auntuono Commercial fisherman Naples, FL	Bill Tucker F/V Broad Creek LLC Commercial Fisherman Dunedin, FL	Billy Archer F/V Seminole Wind Charter/For-Hire Panama City, FL
 Bob Zales Southeastern Fisheries Association Fishing Industry Trade Organization Panama City, FL	Brad Gorst Gulfstream Fishing Vessels Charter/For-Hire Palm Harbor, FL	Brad Kenyon Florida Family Fisheries F/V Dawn Mari Vessel Owner Satellite Beach, FL
Brantley Galloway Hiliner Charters F/V Full Draw Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Brian Helms Commercial fisherman Islamorada, FL	Brian Lewis F/V Trip Limit Vessel Owner Clearwater, FL
Bucky Kauffman Commercial fisherman Naples, FL	Carolyn Wood Vessel Owner F/V Lucky Strike Dauphin Island, AL	Charles Stone F/V Respite Charter/For-Hire Fort Walton Beach, FL



Chris Ruyan
Brotulas Seafood House
Restaurateur
Destin, FL

Clay Shidler
Shrimp Landing Fish House
Vessel Owner
Crystal River, FL

Clearwater Marine
Association
Fishing Industry Trade
Association
Clearwater, FL

Clifford Atwell
Reel Grace Fishing Charters
F/V Reel Grace
Charter/For-hire
Destin, FL

Cynthia Renee
Geir Fisheries
Vessel Owner
Panama City, FL

Darryll Mills
Destin Coast Charters
F/V Reel Blessed
Charter/For-Hire
Destin, FL

David Dewberry
Pelican Adventures
F/V Vera Marie, F/V Good
Times, F/V Deep Obsession
Charter/For-Hire
Destin, FL

Domenick Biagetti
Commercial Fisherman
Naples, FL

Douglas "Kyle" Lowe
Charter Boat Special K
F/V Special K
Charter/For-Hire
Fort Walton Beach, FL



Captain Dylan Hubbard
Hubbard's Marina
Charter/For-Hire
Madeira Beach, FL



Eric Brazer
Gulf of America Reef Fish
Shareholders' Alliance
Fishing Industry Trade
Organization

Eric J Westbrook
New Florida Girl, Inc
F/V American Spirit
Charter/For-Hire
Destin, FL

Eric Woods Woody's Fisheries Commercial Fisherman Perry, FL	Ethan Olah Commercial Fisherman Naples, FL	Garrett Kruger Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association Commercial Fisherman Panacea, FL
Gary Jarvis Jarvis Restaurant LLC Restaurateur Destin, FL	Greg Fenton Commercial Fisherman Hernando Beach, FL	 Glen Brooks Brooks Docksides Seafood Commercial Fisherman, Fish House Inglis, FL
 Glen Brooks, President Gulf Fisherman's Association Fishing Industry Trade Organization Inglis, FL	Jack Payne Retired, University of Florida Fisheries Researcher Gainesville, FL	James Clements Commercial Fisherman Carabelle, FL
James Zurbrick Tides Up Fisheries, LLC F/V Jolly Rogers II Commercial Fisherman Steinhatchee, FL	 James Zurbrick Fish For America USA, Inc Fishing Industry Trade Organization Steinhatchee, FL	 Jason DeLaCruz Wild Seafood Co. Fish House Madeira Beach, FL



Jason DeLaCruz, Executive
Director
Gulf Wild TM
Fishing Industry Trade
Organization
Largo, FL



Captain Jason Lowe
J. Lowe's Guide Services
Charter/For-Hire
Cedar Key, FL

Jason Mikel
Finest Kind Charters
F/V Finest Kind
Charter/For-Hire
Destin, FL



Jerome Young
Florida Keys Commercial
Fishermen's Association
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Association
Marathon, FL

Jerry Anderson
Retired commercial
fisherman
Bonifay, FL

Jesse Baughman
Sexton Fisheries
F/V Bubbalou
Commercial Fisherman
Naples, FL



Captain Jim Green, President
Charter Fishermen's
Association
Fishing Industry Trade
Organization
Destin, FL



Captain Jim Green
Destin Charter Boat
Association
Fishing Industry Trade
Organization
Destin, FL

Jimmy Hull
Hull's Seafood
Fish House, Restaurateur
Ormond Beach, FL

John Coulter F/V Pirate Diver Commercial Fisherman St. Marks, FL	John Fradella Cedar Key Aquaculture Association Commercial Fisherman Cedar Key, FL	John “Tom” Harris, Jr. F/V St. Andrew Bay Challenger Fisheries, Inc. Vessel Owner Panama City, FL
Joseph L. Cannon Cedar Key Aquaculture Association Clam Farmer and Industry Representative Cedar Key, FL	Justin Brantley Charter Boat Phoenix, LLC F/V Phoenix Fishing Industry Trade Organization Destin, FL	Justin Bruland Commercial Fisherman Marathon, FL
Justin Hall F/V Maximus Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Justin Thomas Harris F/V St Andrew Bay Challenger Fisheries Inc Vessel Owner Panama City, FL	Katie Anderson F/V Shock’n Y’all Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL
Kelia Paul Libra’s Love Charters Panama City, FL	 Kelly Kirk Florida Stone Crabbers Association Fishing Industry Trade Association Marco Island, FL	Larry Huntley Commercial fisherman Pensacola, FL

Lewis T. Bessinger Blue Dolphin Fishing, Inc. F/V Scat Cat Commercial Fisherman Inglis, FL	Linda Seyfert Cedar Key Aquaculture Association Wholesale/Distributor Cedar Key, FL	 Lindley Ward Mighty Fine Charters F/V Mighty Fine Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL
Lisa Schmidt IFQ Shareholder Crystal River, FL	Mark Tryon Commercial Fisherman Gulf Breeze, FL	Matt Pless F/V The Raft Commercial Fisherman Ft. Myers Beach, FL
Matt Thompson F/V Pirate diver Commercial Fisherman St. Marks, FL	Matthew Champion F/V Championship Offshore Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Matthew Wheeler F/V Swoop II Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL
Mike Colby Charter/For-Hire Clearwater, FL	 Captain Mike Graef Huntress Fishing Charters F/V Huntress Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Mike Lombardi Lombardi's Seafood Fish House, Wholesale/Distributor Winter Park, FL

Nick Ruland The Fishmonger Restaurateur Ft. Myers Beach, FL	Paul Bertell Leebe Fish, Inc. F/V Father and Son Commercial Fisherman Marco Island, FL	Paul Loughridge Commercial Fisherman Crystal River, FL
Paul Reeves Reeves Fishing, Inc. F/V Renegade Vessel Owner Steinhatchee, FL	Phillip Blackburn F/V Backdown2 Vessel Owner Destin, FL	Preston Muller Gulf-Angler LLC F/V Home Grown Charter/For-Hire Freeport, FL
Ralph Andrew Retired Commercial Fisherman Naples, FL	Raymond Scott Childress G&S Fishing, LLC F/V Affinity2 Commercial Fisherman New Port Richey, FL	Rich Burdell Fisherman Naples, FL
Rick Turner Island Skipper Fishing, Inc. Commercial Fisherman Marathon, FL	 Robert Gill Retired Fish House Dealer/ Processor Crystal River, FL	Robin Perlman University of South Florida St. Petersburg, FL

Rory Cantwell Clam Farmer Cedar Key, FL	Roseanne Cantwell Dog Island Blues Clam Co. Inc Wholesale/Distributor Cedar Key, FL	 Scott Buff Fish Peddler F/V Amy B Vessel Owner Naples, FL
Shan Roper Off the Clock Fisheries F/V Snapper Slapper Commercial Fisherman Steinhatchee, FL	Southern Cross Sea Farms Cedar Key, FL	Steve Maisel Commercial Fisherman Palm Harbor, FL
Steven Rash Water Street Seafood, Inc Fish House Apalachicola, FL	Taylor Waterfield F/V Charter Boat Twilight Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Terry Bessinger Blue Dolphin Fishing, Inc. F/V Scat Cat Commercial Fisherman Inglis, FL
Tim Adams Double Time Charters F/V Double Time Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	Tim Dillingham Dilly's Fish Company Commercial Fisherman/Seafood Wholesale	 Timothy Solano Secretary of Cedar Key Aquaculture Association Wholesale/Distributor Cedar Key, FL

Travis Ream F/V Lady Em Vessel Owner Destin, FL	 Tyler Brielmayer F/V First Light Charter/For-Hire Destin, FL	 Tyler Jarvis Restaurateur Destin, FL
Tyler Massey F/V Hot Spots 2 Charter/For-Hire Gulf Breeze, FL	William Osteen Chums Guide Service Charter/For-Hire Cedar Key, FL	Zachary Istre Straight Hooks / ZKIS Fresh Fish Co Commercial Fisherman Crystal River, FL