



February 5, 2008

Mr. Jim Connaughton, Chairman
President's Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Chairman Connaughton,

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and discuss marine protected areas in the Gulf of Mexico. The establishment of further marine protected areas in the Gulf, or expansion of existing areas, should at a minimum maintain current areas of opportunity for recreational fishing. In fact the future of recreational fishing should be fully protected and its opportunities enhanced. In addition, any further designations must be accompanied by a transparent process with robust stakeholder participation.

Recreational anglers have and continue to lead fisheries conservation. The heritage of fishing as a family friendly outdoor activity has a legacy of conservation with anglers and the sportfishing industry having paid over five billion dollars since 1950 for fisheries conservation. These funds have gone far to support forward looking practices that perpetuate and grow the resource base.

In the Gulf of Mexico 7.3 million recreational anglers spend \$4.7 billion to support 82,700 jobs and contribute \$8.1 billion to the economy. Using sound resource science in balance with this economic contribution will continue to improve recreational fishing and benefit the states of the Gulf of Mexico. We emphasize that any proposal for marine protected areas in the Gulf must enhance recreational fishing opportunity and continue to grow the region's economy.

Sincerely,

Gordon C. Robertson
Vice President
American Sportfishing Association

Jeff Crane
President
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation