

NMFS goes ahead with harmful rules *Paul prepares legislation to stop anti-fisher regulations*
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, April 9, 1998

WASHINGTON, DC - Despite growing opposition in Congress led by US Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced on Thursday that they are instituting new regulations on the shrimping and red-snapper fishing industries. The rules will require expensive ByCatch Reduction Devices on the shrimping industry, and potential reductions in the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) on red snapper fisheries.

Further, the NMFS told Rep. Paul's office that a federal agents will be placed on fishing vessels to monitor the activities.

"This is unconscionable," Paul said when he learned of the new rules, which will go in effect as quickly as 15 days. "Despite the bad science and bad economics of this move, the Department of Commerce and the NMFS are moving forward with these rules which will hurt Gulf Coast shrimpers and fishermen."

Paul added that the potential placement of agents on fishing vessels is "an egregious violation, and is contrary to the Fourth Amendment protection against warrantless search-and-seizures. These vessels are private property, on which the owners may be required to accommodate federal agents."

Knowing that the promulgation of these rules was a possibility, Rep. Paul several months ago drafted legislation to stop the rules if they went into effect. During the 104th Congress, the Contract with America Advancement Act was passed, which allows Congress to revoke certain agency rules within 60 legislative days of promulgation. On the first legislative day back in session - currently scheduled for April 21 - Paul will officially introduce the legislation, as permitted under the law.

"My staff and I have been preparing for this eventuality, and numerous congressmen are aware of the situation and are supportive of reigning in the NMFS and the Department of Commerce."

Earlier this week, Rep. Paul and two other Members of Congress wrote letters to the House Appropriations Committee, asking that the NMFS budget be restricted from implementing these

Rules.

(30)