

FOR RELEASE: January 7, 1999

US Rep. Ron Paul's statement on the opening of Snapper season

"News that the snapper season has been opened is welcome, but not necessarily cause for a victory celebration.

"I have spoken out strongly in opposition to federal snapper season closures, both in 1997 and 1998 and in the proposed 'pre-season' closure for 1999. To me it seems ridiculous that the season could be closed prior to it even being opened and I have written to NMFS and the Gulf Council to express this view. I remain concerned by the notion of further reductions of bag limits but I certainly see this alternative as superior to the notion of season closures. Moreover, as a federal official I realize that actions taken regarding state waters are solely within the purview of the state government.

"My concern is that the federal government will end up BOTH closing the season AND cutting the bag limit. These actions are all part and parcel of the quota-based management system that currently exists.

"I believe that the quota based management system will fail and I also understand that the federalization of fishing rights raises problems of effectiveness as well as of constitutionality.

"I have written to Governor Bush to express my support for the decision to open Texas waters on January 1; the State's position well reflects my belief that local levels of government are most responsive in seeking the common good.

"I have been advocating that the governors and legislators of the gulf states consider a multi-state compact which would help to renew the snapper population. This seems to me to be the best possible long-term solution. In the mean time I am certainly glad that Texas waters will be open in January and February, and I will keep fighting against federal season closures and other restrictive measures."