

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Jessica McCawley, Director, Marine Fisheries Management  
**Date:** July 10, 2017  
**Subject:** Federal Fisheries Congressional Update

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**Purpose:**

Staff will provide Commissioners with an overview of recent and potential federal legislation relating to fish and wildlife.

**Summary:**

During this Congress, several bills have been introduced that are relevant to fish and wildlife conservation in Florida. FWC staff is actively tracking a number of bills and advocating for positions that benefit Florida. FWC staff is engaged on legislation relating to marine fisheries topics, such as fishery access in Biscayne National Park, Gulf red snapper management, sharks, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act reauthorization, lionfish, and spiny lobster. In addition to these issues, FWC is tracking existing Pittman-Robertson state grants and state wildlife grant funding.

As the 115th Congress continues, staff will continue to monitor legislative activities and as directed by the Commission, advocate for outcomes that are best for Florida.

This presentation will cover bills that affect Florida that have been introduced and appropriation language that directs fish and wildlife issues.

Staff will also provide a brief update on action by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to reopen Gulf federal waters to red snapper harvest for private recreational anglers during summer weekends. The season previously announced by NOAA Fisheries was June 1-3. Federal waters are now open for Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from June 16 through September 3, as well as Monday, July 3, Tuesday, July 4th, and Labor Day (Monday, September 4). All Gulf states agreed to align their state seasons with this federal season for the summer. After holding a special FWC meeting to gather Commissioner and public input, FWC issued an executive order that updated Florida's state season to match the new federal season. By doing so, Florida traded some summer weekdays and fall weekends of red snapper harvest in state waters for increased summer weekend opportunities in both state and federal waters.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff requests Commission input and guidance on federal legislative items as presented.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Jessica McCawley, Marine Fisheries Management