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Fish Now, Fish Forever

Hon. David Basham
Minister for Primary Industries and Resources
GPO Box 1671, ADELAIDE SA 5001
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24 August 2021

Dear Minister

RE: Allocation of Snapper; your ref eA194962.

Your letter of 19 July 2021, does little to attend our very significant concerns regarding the inequitable allocation of marine scalefish resources between the recreational and commercial sectors and to suggest that our arguments are “tired”, appears to demonstrate an unwillingness to work with the recreational sector to resolve the critically important issues that are impeding its development.

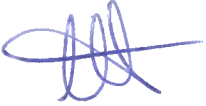
As demonstrated by the numerous projects we have successfully delivered, maintaining abundant fish stocks is at the forefront of what RecFish SA aspires to but the history of management of South Australia’s marine scalefish resources inspires little confidence that the government is capable of, or willing to, collaborate with us to pursue this goal. PIRSA Fisheries were warned many times by both recreational and commercial fishers, that the Snapper resource was being depleted by excessive commercial long-lining effort but did little to rein it in instead, they waited until stocks crashed before exercising any dutiful response. This unfortunately, is typical of PIRSA F&A’s management approach which has transcended successive Liberal and Labor governments over many decades, and has resulted in a general decline in fish populations. Throughout this period, the recreational sector has suffered continual reductions in their share of the resource, while the excesses of the commercial sector have continued to be supported.

The issue of compensation to commercial fishers for changes in allocation is clearly understood but we implore that government must play a lead role in bringing this into effect. Traditional approaches to adjusting allocations to the recreational sector involve cost sharing between government, the recreational sector and the commercial sector and we suggest that opportunities to implement such an approach may currently exist. In saying this, I refer you once again to the mechanisms that may trigger a review of allocations between sectors and ask that you direct PIRSA to work with us to address this most important issue.

Lastly, it is our experience that the opinion of most fisheries managers and recreational fishers across the nation, is very far from one of support for SA’s system of allocation and it is difficult to accept that

this system, which uses single survey, uncorrelated data, to set allocations on an undefined temporal scale, would be “lauded” by responsible natural resources managers.

Your sincerely,



Mick Wilson

Chair, RecFish SA

cc MRFAC secretariat@sa.gov.au