

**CARIBBEAN FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL
270 MUÑOZ RIVERA AVE., SUITE 401
SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO 00918**

**COMMENTS PROVIDED AT
PUBLIC HEARINGS ON
AMENDMENTS TO THE U.S. CARIBBEAN REEF FISH, SPINY LOBSTER AND CORALS
AND REEF ASSOCIATED PLANTS AND INVERTEBRATES FISHERY MANAGEMENT
PLANS: TIMING AND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES-BASED CLOSURES**

**AUGUST 17, 2016
HOLIDAY INN HOTEL
MAYAGUEZ, PUERTO RICO**

The Caribbean Fishery Management Council held a public hearing at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, on August 17, 2016, on Amendments to the U.S. Caribbean Reef Fish, Spiny Lobster and Corals and Reef Associated Plants and Invertebrates Fishery Management Plans: Timing and Accountability Measures-Based Closures.

The public hearing was chaired by Mr. Marcos Hanke, Council Vice-Chair, and was attended by 33 persons. (Attendance sheets attached.)

Ms. Helena Antoun gave a presentation prepared by Dr. Graciela García-Moliner (attached) on alternatives related to Timing of Accountability Measure-Based Seasonal Closures.

Following are the comments provided:

1. Roberto Ramirez – Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico Major
 - The economic impact that these closures will cause is his main concern.
 - There are already enough closures and closed areas.
 - The economy of the Island of Puerto Rico is at stake if these closures are imposed upon the fishermen.
 - Believes there is not sufficient data to support these closures.
 - Imports should be prohibited during the closed seasons
2. Cynthia Lugo Pachecho – Villa de Punta Avila, Boquerón, PR
 - Does not agree with the closures
 - In the case of the lobster this closure is very unfair
 - The ACLs and the process need to be revised every year
 - Prefers the alternative for No Action, closing starting on December 31st and counting backwards the number of days for each closure
3. Alexis López – Independent Fishery, Aguadilla, PR
 - Does not agree with any closure
 - If a closure for the queen snapper should be imposed, it would be better for it to be during the months of November or December.
 - The process should be revised every six months or every year, minimum.
4. Maria Loubriel – Comercial Fisher, Puerto Real, Boquerón, PR
 - Prefers the alternative for No Action, closing starting on December 31st and counting backwards the number of days for each closure
 - The process should be revised every six months or every year, minimum

5. Richi Santiago – Comercial Fisher, El Papayo, Lajas, PR
 - Does not agree with any of the proposed alternatives.
6. Nelson Rivera – Asociación de Pescadores de Añasco, PR
 - There are other factors that are affecting the fisheries that have not been taken in consideration, as for example, sewage discharges, etc.
 - Did not address any of the alternatives
7. Jaime Muñoz Acosta – Comercial Fisher, Puerto Real, Cabo Rojo, PR
 - Does not agree with any of the alternatives and will not do until studies and good data that can support these alternatives are provided.
 - The statistics will be different every year because fisheries change year to year for a variety of reasons, like for example, hurricanes, bad weather, currents, etc.
8. Mari Tere Toro Maldonado - Comercial Fisher wife.
 - None of the dates provided for these closures are good for the fishers
 - There are enough closures and closed areas in place.
9. Vanesa Ramirez - Pescaderia Rosas, Puerto Real, PR
 - The process need to be revised every year
 - Suggests that alternative 2 be combined with alternative 5
 - Closures should be done by species.
 - Information fishery statistics of all the Puerto Rico Fisheries should be made available to all fishers
 - Suggests to have bulletins with all this important information that can be placed at the fish houses.