

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANGLER GROUP FINDS VIOLATION, REQUESTS REMOVAL OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT OFFICIALS

FISHING RIGHTS ALLIANCE DISCOVERS BLATENT VIOLATIONS BY GULF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS, REQUESTS REMOVAL

St. Petersburg, Fla. — Jan. 28, 2015 — A national fishing advocacy group is requesting that the U. S. Department of Commerce remove three members from the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council for failing to disclose financial interest.

The Fishing Rights Alliance, or the FRA, is requesting that Penny Pritzker, Secretary of Commerce, remove Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council members Corky Perrett (Miss.), John R. Greene, Jr., (Ala.) and Harlon Pearce (La.). According to the FRA, failure to disclose financial interest constitutes a violation of section 301(j), “Disclosure of Financial Interest and Recusal” of the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act Reauthorization of 2006.

“Specifically, the three individuals failed to disclose their positions as Directors of the [Gulf Seafood Institute](#), as prescribed by section 302(j)(2)(C): ‘any organization (other than the Council) in which that individual is serving as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or employee’,” stated Craig Berman, FRA Legal Counsel, and Dennis O’Hern, FRA President, in their letter to Secretary Pritzker.

The Gulf Seafood Institute is an organization that engages in lobbying activity, as stated on their [website](#) regarding a fisheries bill sponsored by U.S. Senator for Florida Marco Rubio.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) disclosure form 88-195 (Statement of Financial Interests) states that it is “unlawful for an affected individual to knowingly and willfully fail to disclose, or to falsely disclose, any financial interest as required by the Magnuson Stevens Act or to knowingly vote on a Council decision in violation of this Act.”

The form states that penalties include criminal punishment as well as removal from Council or SSC membership. Criminal penalties include imprisonment for up to five years, fines, or both.

In addition, the Attorney General may bring a civil action in the appropriate United States district court against any person who engages in conduct constituting an offense under section 203, 204, 205, 207, 208, or 209 of this title.

As a result of their involvement with the Gulf Seafood Institute, the FRA is requesting Secretary Pritzker to immediately remove Perrett, Greene and Pearce from the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council and levy applicable penalties and civil actions.

“These Council members should be held accountable for unethical actions. The public should not be subjected to decisions made by those with such blatantly disregard for their rules of disclosure, which is why we are calling for the members’ immediate removal or resignation” stated Dennis O’Hern, FRA’s President.

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council is one of eight regional Fishery Management Councils established by the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976. The Council, which consists of 17 voting members and four non-voting members, prepares fishery management plans designed to manage fishery resources from where state waters end to the 200-mile limit of the Gulf of Mexico. Appointments are three-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms. The Council meets five times a year at various locations around the Gulf coast.

About the Fishing Rights Alliance

The Fishing Rights Alliance advocates for fair fisheries management and conservation practices on behalf of their national membership, which consists of anglers, fishing businesses and professional captains throughout the United States. The FRA’s mission is to protect anglers’ fishing rights by advocating for sound resource management and conservation practices that maximize the opportunity to fish. FRA membership pursues their mission through participation, research and litigation.

Learn more about the Fishing Rights Alliance at www.theFRA.org. Follow the Fishing Rights Alliance on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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