23 March, 2018

Mr. Michael Barnette

SERO Turtle/TED Coordinator

Southeast Regional Office

263 13th Avenue South  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

Mr. Barnette,

We are writing to you today to introduce our organization, the US Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Supply Chain Roundtable (<http://bit.ly/2kWbmbi>). We are a group of US shrimp processers and wholesalers who are concerned with the economic and environmental sustainability of the domestic shrimp fishery. We work with Sustainable Fisheries Partnership to maintain knowledge of the issues facing the domestic shrimp industry, and work together in a pre-competitive manner to address these issues. In addition, many of us have been working on fishery improvement projects (FIPs) and marine advancement plans (MAPs) to further enhance the sustainability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery.

One of the main tasks of these FIPs and MAPs have been proactive gear evaluations by our vendors to ensure that TEDs are properly installed and operating at maximum efficiency. We appreciate the information that has been shared with the public on the Sea Turtle Protection and Shrimp Fisheries page of the Southeast Regional Office website. But we are extremely disappointed that the Sea Turtle Capture Rates and TED Effectiveness in the Southeast Shrimp Otter Trawl Fleet data have not been updated in over a year (most recent update was in April 2017 with data through December 2016), even though more frequent updates are required by the Final TED Compliance Policy.

Public availability of this information is extremely important, as it will allow us to monitor compliance and TED effectiveness and step up our pro-active gear evaluations if necessary. We have heard that the Southeast Regional Office is developing a web-based reporting mechanism that will allow for more frequent updates to TED compliance data, and we appreciate this effort, but kindly request that recent data are added to the current PDF found on the Sea Turtle Protection and Shrimp Fisheries page of the Southeast Regional Office website as soon as possible.

Please notify us, via David Gautier at Captain's Fine Foods (contact information follows), when this information is posted.

Respectfully,

(list signers here)

Cc: Dr. Roy Crabtree, David Bernhart, Robert Hoffman, Laurel Bryant