



October 13, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

As Attorneys General of coastal States, we write today to share our perspective on an issue of vital importance—the proper management of our natural resources, specifically the management of the red snapper and other reef fisheries in the South Atlantic. For the reasons discussed below, we urge you to take concrete action to facilitate the transfer of fishery management authority to the States.

Through our roles as Attorneys General, we have consistently supported a robust view of federalism. This position is rooted not only in principle but also in practice, recognizing that States, as “laboratories” of our democracy, are particularly well equipped to confront novel and difficult problems. *Oregon v. Ice*, 555 U.S. 160, 170 (2009).

And in the context of fishery management, we are doing just that. As recently explained in a letter to you from the Governors of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida,¹ our States are providing proactive solutions to the problems presented by fishery management. The letter specifically highlighted Florida’s record of

¹https://sportfishingpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Red-Snapper-Letter-to-Sec.-Lutnick_06.04.25.pdf

successfully managing the Red Snapper population since it took over management in the Gulf of America.

Or take South Carolina as another example. As explained in a letter from South Carolina’s congressional delegation, “[s]tate agencies possess a stronger ability to gather precise, timely data and customize management strategies based on local conditions. South Carolina’s Department of Natural Resources is already ramping up offshore angler surveys to deliver more reliable landing estimates. Other states are enthusiastically launching similar efforts.”²

In short, States—not the federal bureaucracy—are the best managers of their own natural resources. To better facilitate the transfer of fishery management authority to the States, we would encourage you to consider taking the following steps.

First, we ask you to follow President Trump’s lead and **follow the science**. In a recent executive order,³ President Trump reiterated his administration’s commitment to “restoring a gold standard for science to ensure that federally funded research is transparent, rigorous, and impactful, and that Federal decisions are informed by the most credible, reliable, and impartial scientific evidence available.” In the context of the Red Snapper, that means following the results of the Great Red Snapper Count (GRSC), which will be published soon.

Second, we ask you to **transfer data gathering to the states**. The states are already performing much of this work, and we have already seen the positive results of a state-centered approach in the Gulf of America.

Third and most importantly, we ask that you **transfer management authority to the States**. In doing so, you should use whatever tools are at your disposal, including exempted fishing permits and emergency regulations. This should include immediate consideration of state-led Experimental Fishing Permits (EFP) to fully manage the fishery while the management amendment process is completed. As highlighted in the Governor’s correspondence, the State of Florida is actively preparing an EFP to begin managing the red snapper fishery to support the Council’s approval to full management—the same process Florida leveraged in the Gulf.

² <https://sportfishingpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Lutnick-Letters-May-28-June-13-June-30.pdf>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/restoring-gold-standard-science/>

In closing, we ask you to restore balance to our federalist system and empower states to manage their own resources. We are confident that the results will speak for themselves.

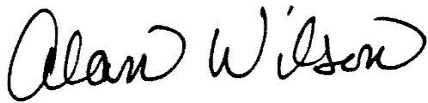
Sincerely yours,



James Uthmeier
Florida Attorney General



Chris M. Carr
Georgia Attorney General



Alan Wilson
South Carolina Attorney General