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For Immediate Release

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### FISHERMEN RALLY AGAINST GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT OF FISHERIES

Thousands of commercial and recreational fishermen are headed to St. Petersburg, FL, the Southeast Regional Headquarters of the National Marine Fisheries Service, for the first ever "Fishing Matters to Me" rally which kicks off at 9 am on Friday, February 25, 2011.

Conservative estimates put the number of licensed saltwater fishermen who live, work and fish within 100 miles of the rally at more than 1 million.

"We have people coming from all over the East Coast, including Massachusetts and North Carolina, and as far west as Texas and California," said organizer Dennis O'Hern. "This is going to be the Woodstock of fishing rallies and people will be talking about it for years to come."

The recent 'emergency' closure of the Gulf of Mexico's grouper fishery has prompted the fishermen to take to the street in protest and demand that congress take action to protect them from unnecessary regulations.

"People's livelihoods are being ruined by the government's reliance on flawed data and outdated science," O'Hern said. "These are real people with families to feed, not just numbers on spreadsheets."

The grouper shutdown, and a similar measure governing red snapper in the South Atlantic, will cost the fragile economies of the Southeast an estimated \$5 billion per year in lost revenue. Recreational anglers and commercial fisherman, two groups once at odds over the same stocks, have come together and found common ground to ask for fundamental changes to the draconian system that manages the nation's fisheries.

"Recreational saltwater fishing is worth \$32 billion to Florida's economy." O'Hern said. "On the average year, more than 6 million residents and visitors fish Florida waters and support more than 100,000 jobs." Details of the rally can be found at [www.theFRA.org](http://www.theFRA.org).

Stop by 310 13th Avenue, South, St. Petersburg, FL and see democracy in action.

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