



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

May 19, 2015
(House Rules)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

H.R. 1335 — Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act

(Rep. Young, R-AK, and three cosponsors)

The Administration strongly opposes H.R. 1335, which would amend the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), because it would impose arbitrary and unnecessary requirements that would harm the environment and the economy. The MSA currently provides the flexibility needed to effectively manage the Nation's marine commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries. In contrast, H.R. 1335 would undermine the use of science-based actions to end and prevent overfishing.

The current requirements of MSA are working – the percentage of stocks that are subject to overfishing and the percentage that are in an overfished state are at historic lows. H.R. 1335 would interfere with the tremendous success achieved in rebuilding overfished fisheries by setting rebuilding targets that are not based on sound, credible science, and that unnecessarily extend the time to rebuild fisheries. In making these changes, H.R. 1335 introduces a series of ambiguous provisions that could improperly extend rebuilding periods, delaying the significant economic and environmental benefits of rebuilt fisheries to both fishermen and the Nation as a whole.

H.R. 1335 would exempt fishery management actions from the requirements for environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act and replace them with a new set of standards. This provision is unnecessary, as the regional fishery management councils have integrated environmental analyses into an overall framework that is both timely and effective. For similar reasons, the provisions regarding the Endangered Species Act, the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the Antiquities Act are unnecessary and likely to give rise to confusion. Rather than reducing burdens on the fishery management councils, these provisions of H.R. 1335 would interfere with a well-established and integrated system and would create confusion, delay, and the potential for litigation.

H.R. 1335 would also severely undermine the authority of the Gulf of Mexico Regional Fishery Management Council by extending State jurisdiction over the recreational red snapper fishery to nine miles in the Gulf of Mexico. This proposed extension of jurisdiction would create an untenable situation where recreational and commercial fishermen fishing side-by-side would be subject to different regulatory regimes. Absent an agreement among the States as to how to allocate recreationally-caught red snapper, the bill would encourage interstate conflict and jeopardize the sustainability of this Gulf-wide resource.

The Administration urges the Congress to support the Administration's efforts to fully utilize the flexibility in the current MSA. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a

proposed rule in January updating key guidelines for implementing the MSA, which would ameliorate many of the concerns that H.R. 1335 seeks to address without undermining the fundamental, science-based requirements of the MSA. H.R. 1335 would introduce uncertainty and delays in rebuilding fisheries, undermine science-based management, weaken the protections provided by other important environmental statutes, and generate sector and interstate conflicts.

If the President were presented with H.R. 1335, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.

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