

June 25, 2018

Dear Members of the Connecticut Congressional Delegation:

We write to you in reference to House and Senate proposals that would weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

As recreational fishermen of Connecticut, our voting habits are influenced by the issues that we care most about, including recreational fishing, the marine ecosystem, employment rates and the health of the economy. We believe that keeping a strong Magnuson-Stevens Act is the right move to support all four of these concerns, and that those seeking to undermine this law are sabotaging all four. The Act has a strong track record in preventing overfishing and restoring depleted fish populations that were once struggling, including bluefish and fluke. But bills in the House and Senate that would weaken science-based catch limits and accountability for our fisheries would put this all at risk. Connecticut fishermen care about the long-term sustainability of our fisheries. Please consider the points we make in this letter and make the right decision.

Some have argued that the Act is unnecessarily restrictive on the fisheries and limits their income potential, but that is actually contrary to the reality of the situation. In reality, the Magnuson-Stevens Act set up a system that focuses on regional flexibility, and over the last 40 years Congress has built on that system to improve the science, data collection, and management tools to allow valuable fisheries to recover for long-term sustainability. History has shown that insufficient regulation of our fisheries has led to moratoriums on those fisheries (examples are the striped bass fishery collapse of the 1980s and the demise of the Gulf of Maine cod fishery) which put many fishermen out of business. Unemployed fishermen and mothballed vessels don't contribute to the GNP.

United States coastal fisheries were saved by the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which banished foreign fishing fleets from the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone, protected fish habitat, mandated a stop to overfishing and rebuilding of depleted fish stocks. In other words, this act protects our fisheries, rather than restricts them. This is what the angling public of Connecticut values: plentiful fish in our local waters. Any profit increases from weakening the law would be short-term only, followed by drastic reductions.

Weakening the Magnuson Stevens Act would be devastating to our recreational fisheries and, ultimately, our economy. Not only does recreational fishing provide healthy recreation and use of our public resources owned by all Americans, but its impact on the economy is significant. Our recreational fishermen contribute much to Connecticut's economy through tackle and bait sales, restaurants, fuel, marinas, motels and many other supporting businesses. This provides many jobs as well. In 2015, saltwater recreational fishing contributed \$367 million in sales to the Connecticut economy and supported nearly 3,400 jobs. Nationwide, saltwater anglers drive our economy, supporting \$63 billion in total sales impacts and 439,000 jobs in 2015.

In summary, we, the undersigned, urge you to continue using the good judgment and support for the people of Connecticut that you are known for, and oppose all efforts to weaken the Magnuson-Stevens

Act. Please work instead to help preserve both the commercial and recreational fisheries enjoyed by the people of Connecticut. Let's continue to improve our natural resources so they may be enjoyed by our citizens and their children of future generations.

Thank you,

Patrick Abate, Madison, CT

Abby Baldwin, North Branford, CT

Lewis Bene, Naugatuck, CT

Aram D. Berberian, New Haven, CT

TJ Biroscak, West Haven, CT

Kierran Broatch, Milford, CT

Rob Cartier, Middletown, CT

Drew Ciok, Madison, CT

Jared Clairmont, Mansfield, CT

Robert Cohn, Orange, CT

David A Collins, West Haven, CT

Pat Craig, Higganum, CT

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Stephen Gressak, Ridgefield, CT

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Chris Hadgkiss, East Hampton, CT

John Hanecak, Cromwell, CT

Christian and Katharine Hart, Clinton, CT

James Kelleher, Northford, CT

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Quentin Kresser, Portland, CT

Andrew Kuczma, Clinton, CT

Dana and Delbert LaPointe, Lebanon, CT

Don Lavallee, Baltic, CT

Tim Lawrence, Rocky Hill, CT

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