



June 25, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader of the House  
U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of Slow Food USA I am writing to express our strong opposition to H.R. 200, the "*Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act.*" Slow Food USA is the national, non-profit organization dedicated to food, farming, ranching, and fishing that are good, clean, and fair for all. We believe that everyone must have access to sustainably and humanely produced food that is good for human health and well-being, the planet, including our fisheries, and those who put food on our tables, including small and mid-scale, community-based fishers.

The current Magnuson-Stevens law is working. Today, the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) *Fish Stock Sustainability Index* shows we are making steady and strong progress in restoring the health of U.S. fisheries. Over two-thirds of overfished stocks have been rebuilt since 1996. From its beginnings in 1976 and through its past two reauthorizations, Congress has consistently amended and strengthened MSA to conserve and sustain U.S. marine fisheries, the people and communities that rely upon them, our strong national fishing traditions, and the food system that provides U.S. consumers with sustainably harvested seafood.

H.R. 200 threatens this progress by increasing the risk of overfishing from weakening science-based annual catch limits and accountability measures and undermines rebuilding requirements. Many of the provisions of H.R. 200 will hinder federal fisheries managers' ability to rebuild and maintain sustainable fish stocks and will threaten the scientific integrity of the stock assessment process.

The legislative process that produced H.R. 200 does not honor the long legacy of bipartisanship established by the sponsors of the original act in 1976, the same legacy honored in each of the law's subsequent reauthorizations. Instead, this bill, ignoring past bipartisan success, would undermine the conservation gains that have been made in rebuilding our nation's fish stocks, threatening the abundance we have achieved that provides the lifeblood of many American small businesses and communities that are key to our strong coastal and national seafood economies.

American fisheries are a public resource and need to be managed under consistent laws and policies that can ensure their sustainability. The Magnuson-Stevens Act has a proven track record for improving the long-term health and viability of our nation's marine ecosystems and coastal fishing communities. Our

1000 Dean Street, Suite 222  
Brooklyn, NY 11238  
+1 718 260 8000

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viable and vigorous seafood system cannot afford to regress to the days of overfishing, depleted fish stocks and hobbled seafood supply chain businesses. We ask that you oppose H.R. 200 and instead support legislation that maintains and improves upon the science-based management that has made our fisheries healthier and more productive over the past decade.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard McCarthy".

Richard McCarthy  
Executive Director  
Slow Food USA

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