



The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Democratic Whip
148 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Representative McCarthy and Representative Hoyer,

Last year during the 40th Anniversary of the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management Act (MSA), the Washington State Audubon Conservation Committee passed a unanimous resolution calling on Congress to strengthen and reauthorize the MSA.

Today, on behalf of the 25 independent Audubon chapters and the 35,000 members of our Audubon network here in Washington, we are writing to urge you to protect the MSA by opposing any legislation that would undermine the Act's core conservation provisions. Audubon Washington is the field office of the National Audubon Society.

In particular, we ask you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, which would undermine years of strong science-based management. These bills would increase the risk of overfishing and threaten the progress we've made rebuilding and stabilizing vulnerable fish populations.

Here on the West Coast, for example, **seven species of ground fish have been rebuilt years ahead of schedule because of the MSA.** The MSA also has been essential to protecting forage fish, which are a critical link in the marine food chain — they provide a vital food source for larger fish such as salmon; marine birds such as tufted puffins, western grebes, and surf scoters; and marine mammals such as harbor porpoises and Orcas. Thanks to the MSA, a variety of local species including lingcod and petrale sole are now bigger and more widely dispersed — evidence that strong fisheries management can work.

H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would extend the timelines for plans to rebuild vulnerable fish populations, delaying when fishermen would benefit from a fully healthy stock. They would exempt many fish populations from science-based annual catch limits designed to prevent overfishing. H.R. 2023 in particular would allow this exemption for the substantial majority of managed fish populations.

With your leadership, reauthorization of the MSA must be bipartisan and based on scientific research. It must continue to uphold and expand conservation provisions that are working. Any legislation must ensure our nation will manage its fisheries for the greatest benefit of all, including future generations.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, and any other legislation that would undermine the conservation provisions that have been critical to the success of the MSA for decades.

Sincerely,

Gail Gatton
VP and Executive Director