

May 18, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi,

As scuba diving businesses, we submit this letter urging you to oppose any reauthorization that damages the core conservation provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA). We are especially concerned about some of the provisions in H.R. 200 that would jeopardize our fisheries, destabilize coastal communities, and undermine America's ability to protect important ocean areas. Healthy fish populations are vital for the ocean environments that we, as diving businesses, depend on for our livelihoods and recreation. There are over 12 million active divers and snorkelers in the United States that drive \$11 billion in spending annually.

Healthy fish populations are an integral part of a robust marine ecosystem. The MSA, our nation's principal law governing our marine fisheries, seeks to end overfishing, rebuild depleted fish stocks and maintain our domestic fish populations now and into the future—and it's working. All decisions about federal fisheries management in the United States are made by regional councils and are designed to be guided by the best available science.

Through the MSA, we have seen more than 40 fish species come back from being depleted and overfishing rates drop to a historic low of 9%. The MSA also allows for the protection of habitats that are essential to the life cycles of fish, from coral reefs to kelp forests to rocky reefs, which are often popular dive locations.

Despite this progress, H.R. 200 and other efforts underway in Congress, seek to undo much of these improvements by allowing decision makers to ignore the science that has been key to the successes that we have seen.

Our concerns include:

- Changing the requirements for depleted populations to be rebuilt in the shortest time possible to the shortest time practicable. The term "practicable" is imprecise and could lead to resource managers prioritizing short term concerns over long term sustainability.
- Exempting many populations from science-based catch limits – including forage fish. These limits establish the maximum number of fish that can be caught each year while still preventing overfishing. By not setting a catch limit, there is a risk of removing too many fish from the environment. Forage fish form the basis of the food chain and provide a source of nutrition for some of our most iconic species, from whales to dolphins to sharks.
- Overriding several key environmental laws, including the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. Right now, these laws work together for the greatest protection of fish life and the environment, but this bill would have the MSA supersede these laws where marine fish are impacted. While there are still challenges, the MSA is a successful law that works to protect fish, coastal communities and the business that depend on them.

We urge you to support businesses like ours and oppose harmful MSA reauthorization attempts in the House.

Sincerely,
The 54 undersigned divers and dive businesses

Steve Spivey, President
Scuba And Archery Center, Inc.
Hot Springs, AR

Michael L Taylor, President
Ocean Extreme Dive and Travel Center
North Little Rock, AR

Jeff Godfrey, Diving Safety Officer
University of Connecticut
Groton, CT

Kristina Trotta, PADI IDC Staff Instructor
Washington, DC

Bill Lamp'l, Owner
Grove Scuba
Coconut Grove, FL

Lisa Mongelia, Owner
H2O Addict Adventures LLC
Cutler Bay, FL

Vance Kondon, Assistant Manager
Rainbow Reef Dive Center
Key Largo, FL

Robert Holston, President
Keys Association of Dive Operators
Key West, FL

TJ Konitzer, Owner
Off the wall Adventures & Outfitters
Lakeland/St. Pete Beach, FL

Jessica S. Dawson, Vice President
Scuba Marco
Marco Island, FL

Bryce Rohrer, Owner
Florida Shark Diving
Palm Beach, FL

Douglas Hammock, Owner
H2O Below
Pensacola, FL

Brenda Mace, Owner
Conch Republic Divers
Tavernier, FL

Marta Mullen, Owner
Castaway SCUBA
Oviedo, FL

Cecelia A. Roycraft, President
Dive Key West, Inc.
Key West, FL

Dave Carmichael, President
Brownies Yachtdiver Stores
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Robert W. Eskew, Managing Member
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LLC
Cortez, FL

Colby Cline, Manager
Crystal River Kayak Co. & Dive Center
Crystal River, FL

Cody Cummins, Manager
Birds Underwater
Crystal River, FL

Kiki Dick, Scuba Diving Professional
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Michael Olson, President
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Michael Goldberg, Owner
Key Dives
Islamorada, FL

Dan Lindley, Owner/ President
Dive Charter
Jacksonville, FL

Jennifer Kerr, Owner
Sail Fish Scuba Dive Shop
Key Largo, FL

Denise VandenBosch, Master
Instructor/Dive&Training Director
Captain Hooks Dive Center & Marina
Marathon, FL

Marlene Quintana, Manager
Ocean Safari Diving
Miami, FL

Valerie Kevorikian, Owner, Operator
Tarpoon Lagoon Dive Center
Miami, FL

Donna Dornbos, Owner
JND Scuba Center
Palm Bay, FL

Chris Williams, Owner
Jolly Roger Dive Charters
Pensacola, FL

Vincenzo Varalla, Manager
Scubatyme Charters
Pompano Beach, FL

Michele Reed, Owner
Discover Diving Dive Center LLC
Port Orange, FL

Tracy Grubbs, Owner
Spruce Creek Scuba
Port Orange, FL

Peter Friedman, Owner
Scuba Partners
Stuart, FL

Jennifer Feller, owner
The Playground Dive Shop
Blue Springs, MO

Greg Thurmon, owner
Mid Missouri Dive Center
Fayette, MO

Alan Shaw, Proprietor
Divers Equipment
Kansas City, MO

Valerie Elliott, Owner
Y-kiki Divers
Saint Louis, MO

Diane Gasalberti, Manager
Cedar Grove Divers Supply
Cedar Grove, NJ

Joan Maddox, CEO
American Diving Supply
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William Cleary, President
East Coast Diving Center, inc
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Dennis Santos, Owner
Elite Divers
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Ryan Hoffman, Open Water Scuba Diving
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Dan Benson, Former owner
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Ferenc Doner, Owner/Instructor
Argonaut Diving
Edmonds, WA

Annie Crawley, Founder
Annie Crawley's Scuba Diving Camp
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David Todd, Diver
REEF Volunteer Fish Surveyor/PDZA Diver
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