

May 28, 2015

Dear West Coast Representatives,

As fishermen and marine-related businesses on the West Coast, we ask you to reject H.R. 1335, a bill to reauthorize and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Among the many problems in the bill, we wish to highlight dangerous provisions that will fragment the planning and implementation of recovery measures for species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The management of endangered species on the West Coast, particularly salmon, requires coordinated planning that balances the needs of many stakeholders with the needs of the endangered species throughout their range, both upstream and in the distant ocean. Legislatively separating portions of recovery management out of the existing ESA process could lead to declines in already-imperiled populations, which could require changes in water allocation and reductions in fishery access, and result in negative economic impacts to fishermen, farmers, and communities. The changes proposed by H.R. 1335 are made only more risky by the onset of severe drought conditions which often affect the West.

H.R. 1335 puts Regional Fishery Management Councils (councils), which manage fisheries in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, in charge of any fishery restrictions necessary to implement a recovery plan under the ESA. Many councils do not have the expertise or capacity, particularly under current budget constraints, to consider the unique cases of endangered species management. The Pacific Fishery Management Council only meets five times a year to cover an already-substantial workload of issues managing our West Coast fisheries. Doing this could add months and years of delay to necessary protections, inject significant uncertainty into the process, and jeopardize the recovery of these species.

We urge you to reject H.R. 1335 to safeguard the coordinated management and recovery of our salmon fisheries and other endangered species to ensure access to robust, healthy fisheries for generations to come.

Sincerely,

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cc:

The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader