



FISHING COMMUNITIES COALITION

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

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

June 22, 2018

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the Fishing Communities Coalition (FCC) and our members, we are writing to you in strong opposition to H.R. 200, the *Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act*. This deeply flawed bill, which would revise and reauthorize the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)* through 2022, would weaken core sustainability provisions of our nation's primary marine fisheries law. H.R. 200 has been reported out of the House Committee on Natural Resources and it is our understanding that the full House will debate and vote on this highly controversial legislation beginning next Tuesday, June 26.

The FCC is a coalition of community-based, small-boat commercial fishing organizations who share a strong commitment to the sound conservation and sustainable management of America's fishery resources. We provide a unified, national voice for our members who represent the interests of more than one thousand fishermen and dozens of coastal communities from Alaska to Maine.

The United States has some of the best managed marine fisheries in the world. This achievement is directly attributable to the MSA and the science-based management program it has created. Under the MSA, 44 once-depleted stocks have been rebuilt since 2000, and both the numbers of stocks experiencing overfishing as well as overfished stocks are at all-time lows. By all accounts, the MSA is not only working: it has been remarkably successful. This success has directly benefited our coastal communities: according to NOAA's 2015 Fisheries Economics of the United States report, commercial and recreational fisheries generate \$200 billion in sales impacts and support 1.6 million jobs.

H.R. 200 would undo this progress and imperil our fish, fishermen, and fishing communities. This anti-science, anti-sustainability bill guts core provisions of the MSA, thereby dramatically weakening it and risking our success to date. This is not the first time we have seen this legislation. In fact, this is the third Congress in which the Natural Resources Committee and some House legislators have attempted to enact this destructive and unnecessary bill. Although the bill passed the House during the 114th Congress, it was never taken up by the Senate due to its contentious nature. Meanwhile, since this bill's first introduction in 2014 and subsequent failed efforts to enact it, the number of

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Half Moon Bay Groundfish Marketing Association • Maine Coast Fishermen's Association • Morrow Bay Community Quota Fund

rebuilt fish stocks has continued to increase and overfishing in United States waters has been virtually eliminated under the current MSA framework. These remarkable successes would not have been possible if any iteration of this anti-conservation bill had been signed into law.

In summary, H.R. 200 would roll back decades of successful fisheries conservation and management by enacting changes that run counter to the MSA's proven, science-based decision-making process. As active members of the national fishing community, we strongly oppose this bill and urge the U.S. House of Representatives to reject it.

Sincerely,



Linda Behnken
Executive Director
Alaska Longline Fishermen's
Association



Shannon Carroll
Fisheries Policy Director
Alaska Marine Conservation
Council



John Pappalardo
Chief Executive Officer
Cape Cod Commercial
Fishermen's Alliance



Rob Seitz
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Eric Brazer
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Lisa Damrosch
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Dwayne Oberhoff
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