

**Patagonia ♦ Thomas & Thomas ♦ Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures ♦ Stripers Forever ♦
The Drake Magazine ♦ Angling Trade Media ♦ Cheeky Fishing ♦ Fishpond Inc. ♦ Hatch
Outdoors Inc. ♦ Low Tide Charters ♦ Mossy Creek Fly Fishing ♦ Kismet Outfitters ♦ Vedavoo ♦
Wingo Belts ♦ Howler Brothers ♦ Middle River Group ♦ Abel Reels ♦ Ross Reels ♦
RepYourWater ♦ Alaska Coastal Hunting ♦ JB Fly Fishing ♦ Little Stone Flyfisher ♦ Blessing
Enterprises ♦ River Sister Fly Fishing LLC ♦ Silver Kings Holdings Inc.**

July 9, 2018

Dear Representative:

As leading manufacturers, retailers, guides, outfitters and media serving the fly fishing industry, we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 200, a bill that threatens the health and abundance of marine fisheries. H.R. 200, the “Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act,” would amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The MSA has been methodically rebuilding fisheries decimated by once-rampant overfishing. Since 2000, forty-four previously overfished stocks have been fully rebuilt, and NOAA Fisheries just reported that the number of overfished stocks is at an all-time low.¹

Thriving and healthy fish populations are at the heart of our businesses, and saltwater fly fishing is a vibrant and growing segment of our industry. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is working as intended to maximize fishing opportunities while ensuring the long-term sustainability of marine fisheries. Yet the work is not done. While the science-based management required under the Magnuson-Stevens Act has dramatically reduced overfishing, fifteen percent (15%) of assessed fisheries are still overfished. Now is the time to double-down on our proven management system, not undermine it.

Unfortunately, H.R. 200 attacks the very provisions in the Magnuson-Stevens Act that are responsible for putting America’s ocean fish on a secure path to full recovery. If enacted, H.R. 200 would allow many different fisheries to be exempted from the annual catch limits and accountability measures identified by independent scientific bodies. Setting clear, science-based limits on catch and enforcing those limits is a hallmark of prudent management. H.R. 200 would also undermine the recovery of fisheries by allowing fisheries managers to relax timelines for rebuilding depleted stocks. Healthy fisheries support the greatest number of angling opportunities, and should be rebuilt as quickly as possible, as currently directed by the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Make no mistake, H.R. 200 seeks to undermine our conservation progress in service of increasing short-term economic gain. As successful business leaders, we assure you that

¹ NOAA Fisheries Status of Stocks 2017, Annual Report to Congress on the Status of U.S. Fisheries, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/status-stocks-2017>

prioritizing the health of our nation's fishery resources is the best way to invest in American businesses like our own. We urge you to vote no on H.R. 200.

Sincerely,

Jeff Patterson, Abel Reels, Montrose, CO

Eli & Tara Lucas, Alaska Coastal Hunting, Kupreanof City, AK

Tim Romano, Angling Trade Media, Boulder, CO

Kirk Deeter, Angling Trade Media, Boulder CO

Greg Blessing, Blessing Enterprises, Colorado Springs, CO

Ted Upton, Cheeky Fishing, Watertown, MA

Ben Kurtz, Fishpond Inc., Denver, CO

John Torok, Hatch Outdoors Inc., Vista, CA

Rick Wittenbraker, Howler Brothers, Austin, TX

John Barrett, JB Fly Fishing, Peoria, AZ

Abbie Schuster, Kismet Outfitters, Martha's Vineyard, MA

Bob Triggs, Little Stone Flyfisher, Port Townsend, WA

Lucas Bissett, Low Tide Charters, Slidell, LA

Tom Sadler, Middle River Group, Verona, VA

Colby Trow, Mossy Creek Fly Fishing, Harrisonburg, VA

Chris Gaggia, Patagonia, Ventura, CA

Corrine Doctor, RepYourWater, Erie, CO

Michelle East, River Sister Fly Fishing LLC, Colorado City, CO

Jeff Patterson, Ross Reels, Montrose, CO

Taylor Vavra, Stripers Forever, South Portland, ME

Art Web, Silver Kings Holdings Inc., Tavernier, FL

Tom Bie, The Drake Magazine, Denver, CO

Neville Orsmond, Thomas & Thomas, Greenfield, MA

Scott Hunter, Vedavoo, Leominster, MA

Ted Upton, Wingo Belts, Watertown, MA

Jim Klug, Yellow Dog Fly Fishing Adventures, Bozeman, MT