



June 22, 2018

RE: Please vote NO on H.R. 200

Dear Representative,

We, the Inland Ocean Coalition and its chapters, urge you to oppose H.R. 200 and any other partisan bills to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). As conservationists, fishermen, seafood consumers, scuba divers and visitors to the coast, we understand the importance and value of our oceans. We are an inland movement that builds land to sea stewardship because we know that all Americans are connected to the ocean no matter where they live. Our chapters are located from the Sonoran Desert to the Prairies and Great Lakes, and our members are part of the many inland communities that care deeply about the ocean.

Thriving fish populations are an essential part of healthy ocean ecosystems and support our nation's fisheries. In turn, productive and well-managed recreational and commercial fisheries directly contribute to a robust U.S. economy, which benefits everyone. Finally, the U.S. is the second largest consumer of seafood in the world, and sustainable fisheries at home can provide our nation with a vital source of fish and shellfish. With sustainable management, our fish can provide for us now and for generations to come.

Our fisheries are some of the best managed in the world thanks to the MSA. Previous bipartisan reauthorizations have strengthened the MSA by grounding fishery management in science and providing greater accountability to end overfishing and rebuild overfished stocks. The result has been a truly impressive turnaround in our fish stocks. Overfishing has been greatly reduced and more than 40 stocks have been brought back to healthy levels.

H.R. 200 threatens to turn the tide on the progress we've made over the last 40 years by weakening the conservation core of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Although there are a number of concerning provisions in the bill, we find a few particularly troubling. The first is a change that would exempt potentially hundreds of species from science-based annual catch limits. Annual catch limits are a proven cornerstone of good management, and they ensure that decisions are based on scientific data instead of politics. The second concerning provision would loosen requirements to rebuild fisheries. Lengthening the timeframe to recover depleted fish stocks will only continue to deprive fishermen, coastal communities, and seafood lovers of the many benefits that derive from healthy fish populations.

We ask you to work to achieve a bipartisan bill that protects and improves the science-based management and conservation measures in the MSA rather than hinder them.

Sincerely,

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