

**Association of Northwest Steelheaders • Center for Biological Diversity • Chesapeake Bay Foundation
• Coastal Conservation League • Connecticut Fund for the Environment/Save the Sound •
Conservation Law Foundation • Delaware Riverkeeper Network • Earthjustice • Earthtrust •
Endangered Species Coalition • Environmental Defense Fund •
Epic – Environmental Protection Information Center • Florida Wildlife Federation • Greenpeace •
Gulf Restoration Network • Hawaii Audubon Society • The Humane Society of the United States •
Klamath Forest Alliance • The Lands Council • League of Conservation Voters •
Marine Conservation Institute • Natural Resources Defense Council • New Jersey Audubon •
New Jersey Sierra Club • Northwest Environmental Advocates •
Northwest Environmental Defense Center • Ocean Conservancy • Oceana • PennFuture •
The Pew Charitable Trusts • Planning & Conservation League • Restore America’s Estuaries •
The Safina Center • Save The Bay • Seacoast Science Center • Sierra Club •
WildEarth Guardians • World Wildlife Fund**

May 27, 2015

Dear Representative,

The undersigned organizations urge you to vote NO on H.R. 1335, a bill to reauthorize and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), when it is considered on the House floor. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is working to restore fish populations and the coastal communities that depend on them. If enacted, H.R. 1335 would threaten this success and the future of healthy fish populations and sustainable fisheries. If passed, H.R. 1335 would significantly weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Act’s conservation provisions by creating loopholes, watering down legal standards, allowing costly delays, and decreasing transparency and accountability.

The previous two Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorizations in 1996 and 2006 were supported by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress and have proven generally effective at ending overfishing and rebuilding depleted fish populations. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 37 commercially and recreationally important fish stocks have rebuilt to healthy population levels since 2000, while the number of stocks subject to overfishing has been cut by almost one-half since 2006, leading to more fish in the water and better fishing opportunities. Improved conservation has led to increased U.S. seafood revenues and landings and to a recreational fishing industry that generated \$58 billion in sales impacts in 2012.

If enacted into law, H.R. 1335 would undermine conservation tools in the current law that are at the root of so much of this success, as well as critical to ongoing efforts to eliminate overfishing, restore still-depleted fish populations, and stabilize coastal communities that were harmed by decades of overfishing. Among other damaging provisions, H.R. 1335 would:

- Roll back the law’s successful rebuilding requirements, including by establishing broad loopholes that effectively remove reasonable time limits and allowing short-term economic concerns to trump the long-term economic and ecological health of the nation’s fish and fisheries (Sec. 4).
- Remove the law’s requirement for annual catch limits for potentially hundreds of species, including some that may be overfished or subject to overfishing (Sec. 5).

- Exempt federal fishery management plans from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an important federal planning tool which requires public engagement in management decisions, adequate analysis of impacts on the marine environment, and the consideration of reasonable alternatives and ways of minimizing adverse impacts (Sec. 7).
- Undermine the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by seeking to put fishery management councils in charge of recovering endangered and threatened marine mammals, sea turtles, and other vulnerable ocean species affected by fishing. These councils lack the expertise, resources and potentially legal authority to address these critical issues (Sec. 15).
- Weaken efforts to protect and restore the ecological health of our national marine sanctuaries, including areas of essential habitat and critical spawning grounds, by putting fishery management councils in charge of fisheries-related activities in sanctuaries (Sec. 15).
- Make a significant amount of publicly-funded fisheries information off limits to fishery managers, scientists, industry and the public (Sec. 10).

The Magnuson-Stevens Act is working to restore and safeguard our nation's fish populations and marine environment. We must continue to build on this hard-earned success and not turn our backs on the future. [We urge you to oppose H.R. 1335](#) and any similar efforts to undermine U.S. fisheries.

Sincerely,

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