

June 25, 2018

My name is Peter Jenkins and I have owned the Saltwater Edge for twenty years. The Saltwater Edge is a tackle business in Middletown, RI with an online presence. I have moved the business several times to larger and larger locations over the years and now employ thirteen employees to varying degrees.

Rhode Island enjoys a rich recreational fishing history that surprising to some is on par with commercial fishing in terms of economic contribution. According to the National Oceanographic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its 2017 'Fisheries Economics of the U.S.' report recreational fishing in 2015 generated \$332-million in sales, compared to commercial fishing generating \$290-million in sales. So both recreational and commercial fishing are important to our economy.

What is most notable about recreational fishing in the Ocean State is that more than half the anglers are from out of state. These travelers choose Rhode Island for its wonderful access to the shoreline, to the water itself via numerous state boat ramps and charter operations and most importantly to the fish. That's why it is so important to preserve our fisheries.

My employees and I have made a good living providing customers with what they need to fish successfully in saltwater. Recreational fishing and the wellbeing of the fish, however, are being threatened by those that hope to weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the fishing law of this nation. Healthy fisheries support recreational fishing and are a vital part of the social identity and economic health of Aquidneck Island and Rhode Island.

There are bills in Congress that threaten sustainable fisheries, like H.R.200 and S.1520 (the Modern Fish Act), that are supported by special interest groups that want to make it easier to take more fish for short-term profit rather than sustainable long-term fisheries and economic stability. These bills are full of loopholes and exemptions that would reverse the progress made over two bipartisan revisions to the MSA. It's the wrong direction to go.

MSA has successfully rebuilt 44 fish stocks since 2000 and is a shining star of bipartisan politics. Success has come from fishermen, managers, scientists and stakeholders working together with a long-term commitment to sustainability. Science-based Allowable Catch Limits (ACLs) have made sure we avoid overfishing and mandatory rebuilding time lines have ensured that fisheries are rebuilt in a timely manner rather than letting time lines slide to take more fish for short term gains.

Our U.S. Senators Whitehouse and Reed, and our Congressmen Langevin and Cicilline, have an opportunity to put the fish and fishermen first. The threats from bills like S.1520 and H.R.200 will only hurt recreational fishermen in Rhode Island and those like me (and my employees) that depend on healthy fish population in order to make a living. We need our Senators and Congressmen to oppose attempts to weaken the conservation measures in the MSA.

Let's look at MSA in a bi-partisan way, out in the open that prioritizes conservation and longevity of our fisheries rather than short-term profit with long-term consequences.

Sincerely,

Peter Jenkins, Owner

The Saltwater Edge, Middletown, RI