

September 25, 2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva

The Mid-Atlantic recreational anglers, charter-for-hire business owners, commercial fishermen, and seafood distributors listed below strongly oppose weakening the the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) and its conservation provisions, as proposed in H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023. For years, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has been working to build healthier fish populations through science-based catch limits and rebuilding plans, leading to more stable businesses and stronger coastal economies. We should not retreat from the provisions that have worked for our region and our communities.

H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 seek to undo years of progress in U.S. fisheries management by undermining the successful conservation provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. These bills would increase the risk of overfishing, and halt progress in rebuilding efforts for depleted fish populations. For example, H.R. 2023 significantly restricts the use of science-based annual catch limits designed to prevent overfishing by making them optional for the vast majority of managed stocks.

Mid-Atlantic black sea bass, bluefish, and scup are important species that support thousands of regional jobs and generate millions of dollars of broad economic benefits to coastal communities. Each one was successfully rebuilt from depleted levels due to the Magnuson-Stevens Act's conservation requirements. The legislative proposals mentioned above could jeopardize those gains and limit progress in rebuilding vulnerable fish populations, which would result in more economic hardships for fishery-related businesses in our region.

We urge you to oppose any effort to undermine the conservation provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, including H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023. The conservation tools established under the Act are critical to ongoing efforts to eliminate overfishing, restore fish populations to healthy levels, and promote improved stability for coastal communities that depend on commercial and recreational fisheries.

cc: Subcommittee on Natural Resources
NY, NJ, DE, MD, PA, VA and NC Delegations

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Angler
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Michael McGill
Angler
Little Silver, NJ

Michael DeLamater
Angler
Belmar, NJ

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Asbury Park, NJ

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Steve Clayton
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