

November 13, 2017

Dear Member of Congress,

We, the undersigned West Coast commercial fishermen, charter boat captains, fishing guides, and seafood distributors, oppose federal fishery management legislation that would hurt our businesses and weaken the conservation and stewardship of Pacific Ocean fisheries. Specifically, we urge you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, legislation introduced in the 115th Congress that would undermine the conservation provisions of the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act).

H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would undo years of progress in U.S. fisheries management by exempting fish species from science-based annual catch limits and delaying the rebuilding of overfished populations. Catch limits and rebuilding plans authorized under the Act work to prevent overfishing and to allow fish populations that have been overfished to rebound to healthy levels. These provisions help to stabilize fishing businesses and coastal communities and should not be weakened.

Rebuilding timelines have been especially vital to the recovery of West Coast groundfish populations, the collapse of which led to a fishery disaster declaration as recently as 2000. After more than a decade of successful rebuilding efforts, West Coast groundfish stocks are now greatly improved. The changes proposed in both H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would make success stories such as this far less likely.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act is helping to improve the sustainability of America's fisheries. Here on the West Coast, regional managers acted decisively in the early 2000's and set 10 species of groundfish on the road to recovery. Seven of these have been rebuilt as of June 2017, some of them years ahead of schedule. These signs of success for groundfish in particular—more and bigger fish dispersed throughout a broader range, allowing for a revitalized fishery off the West Coast – are evidence that the law works to prevent and reverse overfishing, rebuild vulnerable fish stocks, and keep fishermen on the water for the long term.

We urge you to oppose H.R. 200, H.R. 2023, and any other legislation which would undermine successful conservation tools in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

Sincerely,

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Matt Luck
Owner/Fisherman
Pride of Bristol Bay
Bristol Bay, Alaska

Larry Christensen
Captain, Owner (43rd year)
F/V LYRA
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Commercial Fisherman
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Tristan Pettigrew
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