



P.O. Box 399
Longview, WA 98632

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building Washington,
DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Democratic Whip
148 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, Representative McCarthy and Representative Hoyer,

Willapa Hills Audubon Society's (WHAS) mission is to support ecologically responsible ways of life, to help maintain biologically diverse habitats, and to promote environmental understanding and enjoyment of nature. In 2015 and 2016 we wrote to ask you to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Management Act (MSA), the nation's preeminent fisheries management law. Today, we write to ask you to strongly oppose legislation that would undermine the MSA.

Specifically, we urge you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023, which would weaken the management of fisheries across the country. These two bills would increase the risk of overfishing and threaten the progress we've made rebuilding vulnerable fish populations. They would undo years of strong science-based management that is helping stabilize fishing businesses and coastal communities.

H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 would extend the timelines for plans to rebuild at-risk fish populations, delaying when fishermen would benefit from a fully healthy stock. They also would exempt many fish populations from science-based annual catch limits designed to prevent overfishing. H.R. 2023 in particular would allow this exemption for the substantial majority of managed fish populations.

For 40 years, the MSA has helped end fishing at unsustainable rates and has put a variety of local species on the road to recovery. Here on the West Coast, for instance, seven species of ground fish have been rebuilt years ahead of schedule because of the MSA — strong evidence that fisheries management can work.

With today's technology and science, we thankfully know much more about fish populations and the ecosystems they inhabit than we did in 1976 when the MSA was enacted. The science-based provisions of the MSA have meant that forage fish such as herring, smelt, saury, sand lance, and krill have the potential to rebound. That's good news since these tiny schooling fish form a critical link in the marine food chain, providing an energy-rich food source for larger fish such as salmon; marine birds such as marbled murre-

lets, tufted puffins, western grebes, and surf scoters; and marine mammals such as harbor porpoises. Even Orca whales rely on forage fish since they support salmon, which in turn are food for whales. The MSA isn't just about protecting fish — it's about protecting a range of wildlife up the food chain as well.

With your leadership, the MSA will not be threatened by H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023. By supporting strong, science-based policies and upholding essential conservation provisions in the MSA, you can ensure that the nation will manage its fisheries for the greatest benefit of all, including future generations. Healthy coastal areas, habitats, and fisheries are so critical to the Washington State economy and our way of life. Our marine ecosystem, including forage fish, is threatened by overfishing, habitat destruction, warming ocean waters, and countless other stressors and need protection now.

We urge you to oppose H.R. 200 and H.R. 2023 and any other legislation that threatens the MSA's big-picture, science-based approach to managing our nation's marine and fish populations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlotte C. Persons".

Charlotte C. Persons
Conservation Committee