

SUSTAINING AMERICA'S FISHERIES FOR THE FUTURE ACT

What Supporters are Saying about the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act

Supporting Organizations: *Environmental Defense Fund, Ocean Conservancy, Oceana, Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon Society, Pew Charitable Trusts, Center for American Progress, Earthjustice, Monterey Bay Aquarium, American Saltwater Guides Association, Marine Fish Conservation Network, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association, Alaska Marine Conservation Council, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance, Alaska Federation of Natives, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Tanana Chiefs Conference*

Lucas Bissett, Executive Director, American Fly Fishing Trade Association:

"Congressman Huffman's focus on stakeholder engagement through this process makes me feel confident that this Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization will continue the tradition of being a bi-partisan process. In fact, I was part of that stakeholder engagement when I sat in on a listening session held in New Orleans, La. I witnessed first-hand representatives from all sectors getting an opportunity to weigh-in during these meetings. As the Executive Director of the American Fly Fishing Trade Association I commend Congressman Huffman's focus on keeping our federal fisheries sustainable and adaptable because our industries' small businesses rely on them to feed their families and help stimulate our economy."

Robert Vandermark, Executive Director, Marine Fish Conservation Network:

"Representative Huffman's bill further advances fisheries management to benefit our oceans, coastal communities, fisheries-dependent businesses, and local and national economies for a more secure and prosperous future. With this bill, Congress would address the growing impacts of climate change and their physical, social, and economic effects on working waterfronts and coastal communities, as well as improve catch data collection and support for community-based fishing. The Marine Fish Conservation Network thanks Representatives Jared Huffman, Ed Case, and Mary Sattler Peltola for supporting the women and men whose livelihoods depend on prosperous working waterfronts and healthy oceans and fisheries now and in the future."

Linda Behnken, Executive Director, Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association:

"Representative Huffman's bill reflects broad stakeholder input and a deep commitment to the bipartisan MSA tradition. The bill acknowledges that climate change must now be central to all management decisions, and that our fisheries and fishing communities depend on careful stewardship of essential fish habitat, reducing bycatch, and responding quickly to changing ocean conditions. ALFA appreciates Representative Huffman's leadership and we look forward to working with him and our Alaska delegation to navigate the challenges facing our fisheries and fishing communities."

Aubrey Church, Policy Director, Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen's Alliance:

"We are extremely grateful for Rep. Huffman's continued work with commercial fishermen to strengthen the MSA, the gold standard in fisheries management, so it can tackle the challenges of a rapidly changing ocean and industry. The United States has some of the best managed commercial fisheries in the world, and to continue to hold that coveted spot, updating MSA to support climate-ready fisheries, ecosystem-based fisheries management, and fishermen-driven science is paramount. We also strongly support the provisions on working waterfronts. Coastal communities are defined by their access to the ocean, and that connection needs to be protected and fostered for the economic and environmental health of these communities and our country."

Ben Martens, Executive Director, Maine Coast Fishermen's Association:

"Nearly four years ago, I participated in Congressman Huffman's New England MSA roundtable to elevate the issues of conservation, climate, accountability, and modernization in our fishery management system. Today, as Maine rebuilds from historic storms and contends with challenging data shortfalls, these issues are more important than ever. Mr. Huffman's MSA reauthorization bill, rooted in those national stakeholder conversations and updated to reflect the lessons of COVID, contains multiple steps in the right direction for federally permitted commercial fishermen of Maine and the nation."

Theresa Peterson, Fisheries Policy Director of the Alaska Marine Conservation Council:

"The Alaska Marine Conservation Council appreciates the leadership of Representative Huffman and the vision for fisheries embedded in the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act of 2024. AMCC is a conservation-focused organization representing coastal communities and independent fishermen spanning Alaska's vast coastline. We support this strong bill, which offers improvements to the nation's premier marine fisheries law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). The amendments to the MSA bill build upon provisions that contribute to healthy marine resources and healthy communities. We support advancements to promote the long-term health of the nation's fisheries and fishing communities with the inclusion of climate-ready fisheries language. We strongly support the draft's inclusion of two designated tribal seats on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council. In addition, AMCC appreciates and supports the amended language focused on reducing fishery bycatch. Bycatch impacts the ecological well-being of the marine environment and other user groups dependent on the bycaught species. By strengthening the well-being of coastal communities and responsible resource management we can ensure that our oceans and the people that rely on them can thrive for generations to come."

Eric Brazier, Deputy Director of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders Alliance:

"Chairman Huffman came to the Gulf of Mexico and heard loud and clear that commercial fishermen care about the health of our oceans, the integrity of the scientific process, the need for fair and balanced stakeholder participation, the pride we take in sustainability, and our obligation to accountability. Our oceans may be dynamic, but the core tenets of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act are

not – strong, credible science; accountability for all; adherence to catch limits; and a seat at the table for proactive commercial fishermen that are interested in real solutions. We thank Chairman Huffman for his commitment to these priorities and the men and women who go to sea every day to support their families and feed this nation, and we look forward to continuing to work with him on this bill.”

Jacob Mercurief, Mayor of Saint Paul and Saint Paul Tribe Councilmember:

“On behalf of Saint Paul, a primarily Alaska Native fisheries-dependent community, I welcome this bill’s proposals to strengthen the participation of communities in fisheries through the Working Waterfronts Grant Program and by adding the participation of fishing communities as a requirement for limited access programs. Communities are often an afterthought in the fisheries-management process, but are at the forefront of the impacts of climate change and increasingly unstable fisheries. This bill will provide communities with additional tools to respond to the challenges ahead.

As an Alaska Native community, we also strongly support the language in Section 302 adding two Alaska tribal seats to the North Pacific Council. Although Alaska Natives constitute about 20% of Alaska’s population and are disproportionately impacted by fisheries-management decisions, they are not represented at the North Pacific Council table. This proposed change is long overdue.

Subsistence use is incredibly important to remote, Native communities like Saint Paul. It is critical to our sense of self and culture, and also key to our survival in distant locations, where the costs of foodstuffs and other essentials is prohibitive. We appreciate the bill’s effort to define subsistence and raise its profile in the development of broader national fisheries policies.

Finally, we support the bill’s proposals to provide additional tools to further reduce bycatch. Reducing bycatch to the extent practicable has come to mean doing no harm to the fisheries incurring the bycatch, while the directed fisheries have declined or even been shut down. For too long the burdens of conservation have been borne primarily by small boat fishermen in these directed fisheries. This is inequitable, unfair, and in the case of Native fishing communities, violates federal obligations to provide for their well-being. The proposed change to National Standard 9 would restore balance in how the burdens of conservation, through requirements to minimize bycatch, are shared.”

John Melovidov, President, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island:

“The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island supports this bill because it benefits fishing-dependent communities like St. Paul. The MSA is in dire need of updates; this reauthorization bill is responsive to the longstanding concerns we have voiced to federal and state fishery managers as frontline communities experiencing dramatic climate change. There are many positive attributed to this bill, but we are especially encouraged by the additional of two voting seats for our Alaska Native Tribes on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, giving us a much-needed voice in the decision-making process where we have historically been minimized and excluded.”

Molly Masterton, U.S. Fisheries Director, Natural Resources Defense Council:

“The Magnuson-Stevens Act has shown us that putting long-term fisheries sustainability first works. Representatives Huffman, Moylan, Case, and Peltola’s Sustaining America’s Fisheries for the Future Act sets the bar for a reauthorization that would build on the MSA’s successes, plus recharge it to tackle challenges both old, like chronic overfishing, and new, like climate change and the havoc it is wreaking on marine ecosystems. This is a major step in securing a healthy and resilient future for our fisheries.”

Meredith Moore, Director of Fish Conservation Program, Ocean Conservancy:

“The introduction of this ambitious legislation brings us closer to addressing the serious impacts of climate change on our ecosystems, fisheries, and coastal communities,” said Meredith Moore, Director of Ocean Conservancy’s Fish Conservation Program. “Our fisheries are facing growing threats as fish populations decline and climate change dramatically alters the health of the ocean, and we must act now to increase the resilience of fish stocks and fishing communities. This bill modernizes our fishery management system to address these critical conservation issues and moves us towards a more just and equitable management system.”

Tony Friedrich, Policy Director, American Saltwater Guides Association:

“The Magnuson-Stevens Act set the standard for Federal Fisheries management across the globe, and has established a strong baseline for responsible oversight of our commercial and recreational fishing practices. Using MSA as its foundation, the Sustaining America’s Fisheries for the Future Act of 2024 provides an opportunity to strengthen management tools by utilizing best available science to address factors resulting from rapidly evolving fishery patterns and environmental conditions. This Bill recognizes that with new available technologies, we can enhance data collection by NOAA and other regulatory bodies to better understand the impact we are having on critical stocks and regions. We applaud Congressman Huffman for his continued efforts to reauthorize MSA with important added focus on essential fish habitat consultation, bycatch reduction and increased accountability, improving rebuilding outcomes and managing overfished populations. We look forward to working with him and other members of Congress on the continued evolution of our Federal Fishery policy.”

Bethany Carl Kraft, Senior Director of Coastal and Marine Resilience, National Audubon Society:

"This bill introduces stronger protections for seabirds, which rely on healthy forage fish populations to survive," said Bethany Carl Kraft, "By factoring in the importance of forage fish to the ocean ecosystem, accounting for the impacts of climate change, and boosting essential fish habitat protections, this bill will strengthen the MSA for future generations."

Fisheries Forward Coalition (Center for American Progress, Earthjustice, Oceana, Ocean Conservancy, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Pew Charitable Trusts):

“Resilient fisheries are the backbone of coastal communities across the country and are fundamental to food, jobs, recreation, and the health of the ocean,” said Fisheries Forward. “While the Magnuson-Stevens Act is one of the most important tools for conserving U.S. fisheries, it has not been updated since 2007 and does not currently mention climate change. Sustaining America's Fisheries for Our Future Act will help to sustain and strengthen our fisheries so these communities can thrive into the future. U.S. fishery management is still struggling to rebuild stocks and has not kept pace with the impacts of climate change. Fish are the foundation of a healthy ocean, affecting everything in the food web from whales and seabirds to coral and seagrass. When they're overfished, it has cascading harmful impacts not only for our fisheries but also ocean health. The Sustaining America's Fisheries for Our Future Act provides new science-based tools to strengthen core conservation provisions and sustainable management so that communities can count on having resilient and abundant fisheries for years to come. We applaud Rep. Huffman's leadership and commitment to prioritizing these vital improvements.”

