



Key Largo **FISHERIES**
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Thank You Chairman Bishop.

Thank you for taking an interest in our small businesses and families in South Florida concerning the Biscayne Bay National Park's proposed closure.

Key Largo Fisheries represents 4 generations of one family's efforts to supply quality seafood and baits to local restaurants, fish markets, bait and tackle stores. We service directly or indirectly Whole Foods, Publix, Winn Dixie, Bass Pro, West Marine and numerous other businesses in the local South Florida market and also ship nationally and internationally, exporting to China, Canada, Costa Rica and Europe products that come out of Biscayne Bay and surrounding waters. Key Largo Fisheries has 46 full time employees and another 5 part time employees. We have more than 75 fishermen which presents 75+ small businesses employing another 150 people. The closure of Biscayne Bay WILL affect the entire economy of South Florida as 90% of the Ballyhoo (a bait fish), which the sport fishing community depend on are produced inside the park, with many other species also being effected like lobster, stone crab and shrimp as well. The proposed closure would effect at least half of my employee's gross earnings if not their jobs all together. My business has a lot at state.

Congressmen, if you spend much time around commercial fishermen who have fished all their lives you will find that many of them are conservation minded as they make a living from the sea so they desire to take care of the resource. My father was one of those, he was involved in the early days of discussion with the State of Florida for the closed lobster season and he also suggested and the state adopted the measuring system for lobster that we use today. We have a great respect for the sea and what it can produce to supply jobs and food for our people in South Florida and the nation. We ask that you support the people of South Florida by opposing the Biscayne Bay closures as the ripple economic effect will affect our communities. Closures should be based on science not someone's perception of how things appear to be.

Respectfully Submitted.

Tom Hill