



Erik G. Milito
President

**NATIONAL
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September 15, 2026

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Westerman and Ranking Member Huffman,

On behalf of the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA), I write in support of the bipartisan Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act and urge the Committee to report the bill favorably. NOIA represents the full spectrum of the offshore energy industry, including companies that operate on the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf, and the service, supply, and technology firms that support them. These very NOIA members own and operate much of the offshore infrastructure this legislation addresses, and many have partnered with state artificial reef programs for decades.

Infrastructure that the offshore energy industry installs becomes valuable marine habitat, supporting an abundance of fish and other marine life. That is especially important in the Gulf of America, where natural reef habitat is limited. Infrastructure that helps produce high-paying jobs and safe, reliable American energy for decades accumulate coral, crustaceans, and forage species that sustain snapper, grouper, and other managed fisheries. State-run Rigs-to-Reef programs provide a proven way to preserve these valuable marine habitats. More than 600 former offshore platforms have already been reefed in the Gulf of America, all successfully supporting marine life, fisheries, recreation, and coastal communities. These programs extend the benefits of offshore infrastructure responsibly and sustainably long after energy production ends.

The Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act builds on that success by creating a clearer, more workable process for converting eligible offshore structures into permanent artificial reefs. The bill sets defined criteria and timelines for federal review and gives operators and state programs a predictable path from initial notice through final approval. It preserves existing state artificial reef programs, leaves other reefing and decommissioning authorities intact, and requires no new federal spending.

We thank Congressman Mike Ezell for his leadership and Representative Troy Carter for working across the aisle on a practical conservation solution. This is common-sense policy that serves fisheries, coastal economies, and responsible offshore energy operations at the same time. NOIA urges the Committee to favorably consider the bill, and we look forward to continued bipartisan progress as it moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Erik Milito", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Erik Milito,
NOIA President