
FISHING COMMUNITY COALITION



October 16, 2015

The Honorable John Fleming
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans
1324 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Power, and Oceans
1329 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Huffman,

The Fishing Community Coalition (FCC) is an association of community-based, small-boat commercial fishing groups, representing more than 1,000 independent fishermen and business owners from Maine to Alaska, who share a commitment to the sustainable management of America's fishery resources. The FCC was formed to strengthen and unify the individual voices of our member organizations.

Our fishermen work tirelessly to promote marine stewardship and thriving commercial fisheries within their communities and the FCC seeks to translate these regional efforts into a cohesive approach to achieving sustainable fisheries nationwide under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). That's why the FCC strongly opposes H.R. 3094 – the "Gulf States Red Snapper Management Authority Act" (Act) – as it would exempt this fishery from the science and conservation requirements of the MSA.

All of our organizations have witnessed the successful recovery of fisheries in our own regions under the MSA, which requires managers to establish reasonable catch limits and accountability measure to prevent overfishing and ensure stocks rebuild in a timely manner. Under the MSA a total of 37 stocks have been successfully rebuilt and less than 10 percent of the nation's assessed fish stocks are now subject to overfishing. These successes were achieved through a science-based, transparent process involving all stakeholders, including communities of fishermen. We understand that the future of our nation's fisheries, as well as the fishermen and businesses they support, depends on maintaining commitments to end overfishing and rebuilding depleted stocks.

H.R. 3094 is a short-sighted and misguided effort to eliminate community participation in management decisions in order to prioritize near-term gains over the long-term success of the fishery. The plan undermines existing successful management plans for the commercial and charter sectors, and fails to provide sufficient detail on how the fishery would be better managed by the Gulf states and what measures would be taken to prevent sufficient transparency and end overfishing in the future. In fact, H.R. 3094 would allow nearly 10% of the commercial fishery to be eliminated each year, and while the Act proposes to keep commercial red snapper shares "intact" it does nothing to protect the commercial allocation upon which the shares are based. This

uncertainty threatens the sustainability of the stock as well as the livelihoods of the fishermen and communities that depend on access to this fishery.

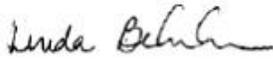
Adoption of H.R. 3094 would also set a dangerous precedent for fisheries management across the nation by allowing a group of states to circumvent the core national conservation principles of the MSA in order to placate a single interest group. Nationwide, our organizations have worked constructively with sport and charter fishermen to ensure sustainable access for all fishermen and that fish stocks are not overfished because all fishermen, fishing communities and fishing business depend on robust fisheries.

As members of the FCC, we urge you to oppose this blatant effort to place one user group's interests over all others. The MSA established an open, inclusive management process to balance the interests of all user groups in allocation decisions. The law requires that decisions be fair and equitable so as not to disadvantage any particular group. H.R. 3094 is anything but fair and equitable as we believe it will result in significant harm and would open the door for complete elimination of the commercial red snapper fishery in the coming years.

Thank you for your consideration. We appreciate your show of support for fishing dependent communities nationwide by opposing this ill-conceived plan.

Sincerely,

The Fishing Communities Coalition



Linda Behnken
Executive Director
Alaska Longline Fishermen's
Association



John Pappalardo
Chief Executive Officer
Cape Cod Commercial
Fishermen's Alliance



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Shannon Carroll
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Eric Brazer
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Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish
Shareholders' Alliance

cc: Congressman Garret Graves
Congressman Don Young
Congressman Rob Wittman
Congressman Tom McClintock
Congresswoman Cynthia Lummis
Congressman Jeff Duncan
Congressman Paul Gosar
Congressman Doug LaMalfa
Congressman Jeff Denham
Congressman Dan Newhouse
Congressman Tom MacArthur
Congressman Rob Bishop

Congresswoman Grace Napolitano
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Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo
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Congressman Alan Lowenthal
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