



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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James J. Gilmore, Jr. (NY), Chair

Patrick C. Keliher (ME), Vice-Chair

Robert E. Beal, Executive Director

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

August 6, 2019

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1511 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Ranking Member, Committee on Natural
Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Bishop:

I am writing in support of H.R.3115 – the *Living Shorelines Act of 2019*, sponsored by Representative Frank Pallone (D-NJ).

The *Living Shorelines Act of 2019* represents an important step in combating habitat loss and degradation, a substantial factor affecting the long-term sustainability of our nation's fisheries. In addition, the legislation will prepare our nation's coasts for rising sea levels and more severe and unpredictable weather events. H.R.3115 addresses both issues by providing grants to coastal states, communities and nonprofit organizations to construct living shoreline projects.

The goal of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Habitat Program is to improve fisheries habitat conservation through partnerships, policy development, and education. While many forms of habitat conservation are beyond the operational jurisdiction of ASMFC, the Habitat Program has long recognized the importance of habitat to sustainable management of Atlantic coastal fisheries. This necessitates creative approaches that integrate habitat protection, restoration and enhancement, and the *Living Shorelines Act* represents an important step forward for humans and marine animals alike.

Living shorelines are being adopted with increasing frequency to address coastal shoreline erosion issues along both public and private shoreline properties. This type of shoreline protection is mostly used along shorelines fronting bays, sounds, and in other estuarine settings, as beach and inlet systems experience energy levels that are higher than those for which natural materials can successfully be employed.

These 'green' erosion control installations are often compared to 'gray' infrastructure like seawalls and revetments. Unlike their gray alternatives, living shorelines integrate habitats across the shoreline landscape by promoting the land-water continuum, provide enhanced habitat for fish and wildlife, naturally adapt to changing sea levels in the face of climate change, and enhance the natural beauty of their adjacent properties. Depending on the living shoreline installed and the

area's wind field, living shorelines show less damage and protect shorelines equally as well as artificial armoring.

As sea level rise continues, stabilizing vulnerable shorelines against wave energy and erosion will continue to be important to those living along coastal waters. Using living shorelines to accomplish this will ensure connections remain established between the uplands and estuaries to maintain or even improve the health of the important fish habitats they sustain.

Thank you for your consideration of the *Living Shorelines Act of 2019* and please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. E. Beal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Robert E. Beal