

November 10, 2021

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chairman, Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
Ranking Member, Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Huffman and Ranking Member Bentz:

My name is Rick Crawford, and I am the founder of the Fly Fishing Climate Alliance (FFCA)* and President of Emerger Strategies**. I was pleased to see that for the first time, H.R. 4690, the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act, seriously takes on climate change impacts in our fisheries. This only makes sense because the science is telling us that in order to avoid catastrophic effects of climate change, we must halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and be carbon neutral by 2050. That said, you don't need to be a sustainable business professional, or a climate scientist to know that we need to adapt to the impacts we are seeing now – including the sea level rise we are experiencing in Charleston, stocks of prized marine species shifting north, more acidic marine waters, and the more frequent extreme weather events like hurricanes, marine heatwaves and coastal erosion all of which are effects of climate change. Climate change is happening in real-time and as a recreational angler and a person who represents many businesses in the fly fishing industry, I am deeply concerned about climate change and its impact on healthy fisheries and marine habitats and our preparedness to be able to adapt to shifting stocks, the use of credible science in the fight to save our fisheries and the multiple fishing communities along the South Carolina coast who will also be impacted.

As a recreational angler I am incredibly fortunate to spend a lot of time on the water with a rod in hand, but I am seeing fish and bird species I never used to catch or see growing up in the Lowcountry. I enjoy catching snook and admiring roseate spoonbills just as much as the next guy, but I shouldn't be able to catch or see either one in South Carolina, but as our climate warms, I am seeing more and more. In fact, someone caught a record snook in Charleston Harbor just a few months ago. I have also heard reports that our beloved and delicious shrimp are moving further north as our ocean warms, and I am bringing this to your attention because H.R. 4690, legislation to update the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) accounts for this by giving Councils the tools to ensure fishing is sustainable while determining how to manage fisheries across political and boundaries when stocks shift and making sure new fisheries are sustainable.

Just as climate science uses the best possible data and is peer-reviewed by experts in the field to come to an educated conclusion, good fisheries science should incorporate climate change so that we are able to make the best decisions possible to manage our fisheries, and investments in science makes perfect sense to give managers the information and tools they need to ensure that we are tracking the changes

climate change is creating and making sure that we maintain healthy, vibrant fish stocks. H.R. 4690 incorporates climate throughout the management system and ramps up the production of climate science and data to enhance the current fisheries information systems we already use. The addition of climate information into our fisheries management system will help build strong and resilient management systems for the future of our fisheries.

Finally, I am also concerned about the impact climate change will have on fishing communities along the South Carolina coast. Fishing communities are vulnerable to several threats, especially as climate change impacts the health of our marine habitats, the bill reforms the way we address disaster assistance to fishing communities which will be important as marine heat waves, harmful algal blooms and other climate related events increase in frequency.

All of the aforementioned effects of climate change are a bit depressing, and I have found that the cure for depression is action, which is why I am asking you to take action and support reauthorizing fisheries for climate change in the upcoming Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act (MSA) Reauthorization. The reason I am asking for your support is because MSA has been proven effective since its inception in managing fish stocks, and the effects of climate change are happening now in South Carolina and across the US. Supporting MSA Reauthorization will help to adapt to changing migratory patterns, incorporating climate science to properly manage our fisheries and protect our coastal fishing communities who are dependent upon our natural resources for survival.

Protect what you love,

Rick Crawford

* FFCA is an alliance of fly fishing guides, shops, lodges, brands and nonprofits committed to going carbon neutral by 2030. With over 50 members, it is abundantly clear that the fly fishing industry wants to protect their businesses and the natural resource they depend upon by going carbon neutral.

**Emerger Stragies is a sustainable business consultancy that specialized in helping companies measure and reduce their carbon footprint. More and more companies are feeling pressure from consumers, but also companies like Amazon, Wal-Mart, REI and others who are demanding that their suppliers have a climate action plan, or they will be unable to sell products through them.

CC:

Rep. Raul Grijalva, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee

Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee