



PACIFIC  
ISLANDS  
FISHERIES  
GROUP

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Congressman Jared Huffman  
Chairman  
Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee

Congressman Cliff Bentz  
Ranking Member  
Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee

Congressman Don Young  
Acting Ranking Member  
Water, Oceans and Wildlife Subcommittee

Dear Honorable Congressmen,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the Subcommittee's consideration of H.R. 4690, H.R. 59 and H.R. 5770 which proposes to amend the nation's premier marine fishery law, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA).

The MSA remains the cornerstone of effective marine fisheries stewardship in the United States. The law's emphasis on implementing science-based annual catch limits, mandating accountability across sectors, and requiring prompt rebuilding have led to numerous successes and well managed fisheries across the nation.

A great example of this process has been the successful management of Hawaii's bottomfish fishery. This important fishery is rooted in Hawaii's rich diverse ethnic community and supports the thriving tourist-based economy. Bottomfish in Hawaii commands the highest year-round average price per pound as compared to all other commercially landed species. It is highly prized for its cultural value in the islands and is the center piece during celebrations such as New Year's, wedding, birthdays and other special occasions. In 1986 the Western Pacific Fisheries Management Council (Council) established the Bottomfish and Seamount Groundfish Fishery Management Plan in Hawaii. That prohibited certain destructive fishing techniques, including explosives, poisons, bottom trawls and bottom-set gillnets throughout the Pacific island region.

The Council implemented the first limited entry permit system in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) for finfish in 1988. These rules helped to protect the traditional hook and line fishery and the unique deepslope ecosystem and habitat surrounding the Hawaiian archipelago. In 1999, the Council amended the FMP to create a second NWHI limited entry program in the southern Mau Zone establishing 10 non-transferable permits, annual landing requirements and an allocation of 20% of the permits for the indigenous Hawaiian communities.

The NWHI made up 75% of Hawaii's most pristine bottomfish grounds where a maximum of 17 limited entry participants (7 Hoomalu Zone and 10 Mau Zone) harvested 50% of Hawaii's total annual bottomfish landings. Unfortunately, the NWHI bottomfish fishery came to an abrupt end in 2010 through the Presidential Proclamation 8031 issued under the authority of the Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 431-433) on June 15, 2006 designating the NWHI as a Marine National Monument. The closure of the NWHI fishery further increased reliance on imported foreign fish from.

The MSA has brought much needed resources to collect information and data to better understand and sustain the main Hawaiian island bottomfish fishery for generations. The Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG) has been working with NOAA Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) through Independent Cooperative Fisheries Research project for the past 10 years in the Main Hawaiian Islands. PIFG's fishermen have conducted the annual bottomfish survey throughout the Main Hawaiian Islands (MHI) in close collaboration with PIFSC. In 2020, PIFG successfully completed one of only three NMFS fishery surveys conducted across the Nation due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. This new information along with a better understanding of the decades of fishery data collected has led to improved stock assessments and a six fold increase of the MHI bottomfish fishery's annual catch limit.

As an island community, surrounded by the sea, our highest priority is the continued access to our well-managed sustainable fisheries and the collection of information to ensure our families will enjoy these same resources into the future. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony on the proposed Bills to amend the MSA and your continued support of fisheries in Hawaii and throughout our Nation.

Sincerely,



Neil Kanemoto  
PIFG President