

November 11, 2021

House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Letter to Committee H.R. 4690



To whom it may concern,

My name is Patrick Rudman, and I am the owner of Old Maine Outfitters in South Portland, Maine. Since its inception in 2019, Old Maine Outfitters has been a carbon-neutral company and a proud member of the Fly Fishing Climate Alliance. In addition, my company donates 25% of its profits to fisheries conservation, with a focus on striped bass - our primary saltwater game fish here in Maine, and a species that is in grave trouble. My business depends heavily on the outdoor community here in Maine and all along the east coast. The vast majority of my customers are anglers passionate about our oceans and our fisheries, and I am certainly no different. It's because of these reasons, I'm writing to express my support of the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Since the last time the MSA was reauthorized in 2007, we have experienced considerable changes to our fisheries and environment and I'm encouraged to see that this bill tackles some of the most daunting issues such as climate-ready fisheries, rebuilding our overfished/depleted stocks, improving our recreational data collections, and better management for forage species.

It's undeniable that we are in a critical period of our lives when it comes to our climate. Climate change is making ocean waters warmer, more acidic, and lower in oxygen. The Gulf of Maine is warming ~95% faster than the rest of the world's oceans and was in a marine heatwave for much of 2021 according to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. At the same time, sea levels are rising and extreme events such as hurricanes, coastal erosion and sea ice loss are becoming more frequent. The populations of fish are shifting to seek cooler waters, and many fish stocks are becoming less productive and less abundant, making it harder for those stocks to support ecosystems and fisheries. These changes are setting the stage for devastating losses for our fisheries and economy if left unaddressed.

I am encouraged to see that the changes to the MSA proposed in the bill will address climate change in the law for the first time. These changes will be the foundation for building a strong and resilient management system for the future allowing managers to consider climate impacts in management decisions while referencing expanding climate science and data. These considerations are absolutely necessary when structuring rebuilding plans for these depleted species.

Our climate is changing and with that our oceans and fisheries are changing as well. Stocks are shifting and like all the east coast we are seeing species never seen before here in Maine. If we do not get ahead of these changes and begin to manage our fisheries using the best available science as it pertains to all environmental aspects, then we are doing a great disservice not just to ourselves, but to our climate, fisheries, and generations to come.

The proposals in the MSA are inevitable management considerations. I am extremely encouraged with the foresight of Representatives Jared Huffman (D-CA-02) and Ed Case (D-HI-01) in introducing H.R. 4690, the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act. This common-sense legislation can lead our decisions for the next decade.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Rudman', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Patrick Rudman
Old Maine Outfitters, Founder
patrick@oldmaineoutfitters.com