

November 29, 2021

Honorable Members of the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife
U. S. House of Representatives
217 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Jared Huffman, Chairman
Congressman Cliff Bentz, Ranking Member
Congressman Don Young, Acting Ranking Member

COMMENTS RE: H. R. 4690 Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act of 2021

Dear Members of the Subcommittee on Water Oceans and Wildlife:

I am Roy Morioka, former Council Member and Council Chair to the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on H. R. 4690. There are eight regional councils created by the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) to address the uniqueness of fisheries in each of these regions. **As an overall comment, the one-size fits all should NOT be mandated as has occurred with each reauthorization by amendments to the MSA.**

Title 1: Climate-Ready Fisheries

Broadly, Fishery Councils are the least equipped or funded to anticipate and address climate change impacts when those agencies assigned to singularly focus on this are not in consensus. Councils like all other agencies would be in a "response" and or "react" mode given that varying impacts that climate change can cause to their respective regions. For islands like Hawaii, coastal flooding by sea level rise or changes in ocean currents due to ocean warming could cause dramatic changes to fishery habitats but anticipating where and how these changes and to what extent remedial actions would be needed would be in response to changes on a case-by-case basis. Most importantly, to require changes to the fishery management plans to address impacts to fish stocks, marine ecosystems, etc. will be in response to ever changing conditions is unrealistic.

Section 305(c): Lobbying

Further clarification is needed in this section with regard to the definition of "lobbying". When a legislator approaches the council and seeks information or invites the council or its members to contact him/her, to share concerns and or issues on a proposed legislation affecting its region, this should NOT be considered lobbying by the council or its members while on a fisheries related meeting in Washington D. C. convened by NOAA/NMFS.

Section 406: Recreational Data Consistency

The collection of "good" recreational data has long been a passion of mine as a Council Member and as a fisherman who believes in science-based sustainable fisheries. I viewed this section as a "punt" as NOAA/NMFS has been criticized by the National Academy of Sciences for years and have yet to produce results. Fishermen and councils have attended several recreational summit meetings to address this effort but nothing of substance

ever resulted. Councils and fishermen long pushed for regional autonomy in addressing recreational data collection. I was heartened by Section 202: Subsistence Fishing to define the term "Subsistence Fishing" as we in Hawaii have long advocated to replace the term "Recreational Fishing" with the term "Non-Commercial Fishing" as it provides a broader definition of non-commercial fishing to include subsistence, artisanal, and "traditional" fishing practices.

Each region is unique, and while 49 States have fishing licenses, Hawaii and Puerto Rico do not. However, in Hawaii there are fisheries like the Deep 7 Bottomfish fishery that requires all vessels including "recreational" vessels targeting these Deep 7 species to be specially registered. This is a small fishery but steeped in tradition and customs and is currently managed under the MSA's Annual Catch Limit (ACL). It has been difficult to determine the catch and effort made by the "recreational" fishery for stock assessment purposes since there are no requirements to report their Deep 7 catch while the commercial sector is required to report their catch of Deep 7 species within 7 days of the trip. This requires a unique approach toward gathering the best catch and effort data by the non-commercial sector including the recreational sector by surveying only those individuals who are allowed to participate in the Deep 7 fishery rather than sending mailers to all households in Hawaii. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed strategic plan to improve timeliness, accuracy and precision afford and allow councils and regional science centers the latitude needed to address unique fisheries as noted above toward obtaining the BEST available science to improve the management of our nation's sustainable fisheries.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide comments on a few areas included in H. R. 4690.

Sincerely,



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