

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 Congressmen Huffman and Bentz:

I am an avid angler and President of the Cape Cod Salties Sportfishing Club. I write today in support of the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act (HR 4690).

The Cape Cod Salties organization was founded in 1959 by commercial striped bass fishermen concerned with access to the shore line. Today, we are an organization of men and women, from all walks of life and all levels of angling proficiency from novice to professional. We are delighted to know that NOAA Administrator Dr. Rick Spinrad and NOAA's Senior Climate Advisor Ko Barrett are key members of the US delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Scotland this week.

HR 4690 addresses many of the issues we have been advocating for in recent years. In particular we support the robust climate change initiatives in the bill as climate impacts are having a profound impact on habitat, fish and anglers in Massachusetts. And, MSA in its present form is not equipped to handle the changes we are experiencing, as science tells us climate impacts are growing exponentially. The Gulf of Maine to our north is warming faster than any other ocean in the world.

We support the idea of the National Marine Fisheries Service stepping up to settle disputes if Regional Councils cannot decide who is responsible for a specie's Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) when stock movement occurs due to climate change impacts. We also support the related issue of seats on Councils where states have no representation.

The bill tries to address the issue of stocks shifting into different Council jurisdictions due to climate change by having the New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic Councils having seats on each other's council. The idea has merit but needs work to more closely reflect where the fish are today and where they will be in the near-term future.

We applaud using electronic recording and citizen science to complement fisheries data making it more robust to manage stocks and encourage Electronic Technology (ET) use particularly when it is used to assess recreational fishing and climate change impacts.

MSA has been working, so we need to keep science-based Allowable Catch Limits (ACLs) and rebuilding timelines strong to rebuild fish stocks as they have started to falter since 2018. Today a fifth of known stocks are overfished. Overfished stocks, such as Gulf of Maine Atlantic cod, may become a thing of the past. It has been overfished for 30 years.

We ask the Subcommittee and all members of Congress to support the Sustaining America's Fisheries for the Future Act.

Thank you for the good work.

Sincerely,

John Creighton, President

Cape Cod Salties Sportfishing Club

CC: Rep. Raul Grijalva, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee and Rep. Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee