



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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A.G. "Spud" Woodward (GA), Chair Joseph Cimino (NJ), Vice-Chair Robert E. Beal, Executive Director

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

8/3/2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
1203 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Westerman and Ranking Member Grijalva,

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is writing in support of H.R. 5103, the Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act (or FISHER Act).

The Commission is a Compact of the 15 Atlantic coastal states that manages nearshore marine fisheries that occupy multiple states' waters. Congress approved the Compact in 1942 and granted the Commission management authority in 1984 and 1993 through the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act and the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, respectively. Today, the Commission manages 27 of the coast's most productive and iconic fisheries, nine of which are cooperatively managed with our federal partners.

We are thankful for the procedural changes made to fisheries disaster determinations by the Fishery Resource Disaster Improvement Act. The FISHER Act is an appropriate next step in addressing further delays in the process. This bill, should it be enacted into law, would help us get rapid relief into the hands of those who need it most.

Our member states have experienced significant delays between when a disaster occurs and when the funding finally reaches affected stakeholders. Examples of this can be seen with the Atlantic herring disaster, which affected the greater Atlantic region in 2019, and with the 2018 Georgia and South Carolina penaeid shrimp disaster. Those impacted by these events are finally receiving their assistance in 2023.

Five years is far too long for our stakeholders to wait on lifelines. The FISHER Act helps shorten this timeline in an effort to make the relief funds relevant to the stakeholders who have suffered. By imposing a strict timeline on the Office of Management and Budget, acknowledging their role in the delays, and adding transparency to the process, this bill would help improve the process and timing of distributing assistance to those impacted by fisheries disasters. For these reasons, ASMFC is supportive of the bill.

Please let me or my staff know if you have any questions or if the Commission can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Beal

cc: ASMFC Commissioners

L23-95