



## GULF STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

2404 Government Street, Ocean Springs, MS 39564

(228) 875-5912 • (228) 875-6604 Fax

*www.gsmfc.org*

August 8, 2023

Honorable Bryon Donalds  
United States House of Representatives  
1719 Longworth Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Donalds:

On behalf of the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC), I write to you to express our support for H.R.5103, "Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act (FISHES Act)."

The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) is an organization of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida whose coastal waters are in the Gulf of Mexico. Authorized under Public Law 81-66, the compact that created the GSMFC was signed by the representatives of the Governors of the five Gulf States on July 16, 1949.

Working with state agency leadership, commercial and recreational anglers, and other interested parties, one of the most important functions of the GSMFC is to serve as a forum for the discussion of various problems and programs of marine fisheries management, industry, and research and to develop a coordinated policy to address those issues for the betterment of the resource and all who are concerned. One of the major issues we face in the Gulf of Mexico are fisheries disasters that can cause sudden and unexpected losses, leading to serious economic impact for fishermen and their communities. In these instances, a state governor or an elected or duly appointed representative of an affected fishing community can request a fishery disaster determination from the Secretary of Commerce.

Unfortunately, the process is quite burdensome and extremely slow, and funding to the affected fisheries is distributed years after the impacts which is ineffectual in assisting the affected communities. The legislation aims to streamline this process so funding is provided in a timely manner to fishermen and their communities. The GSMFC and its membership wishes to express their support for requiring the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to approve or deny spend plans within a certain amount of time, and are appreciative of the Congressman's effort to make the fishery disaster determination process more efficient and timelier.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if GSMFC can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

David M. Donaldson  
Executive Director