



Oct. 26, 2023

Congressman Byron Donalds
1719 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

RE: FISHER Act

Dear Congressman Donalds,

The Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the protection of the Sanibel and Captiva Islands and the surrounding coastal areas. As barrier islands situated in the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the Caloosahatchee River, the community of Sanibel and Captiva understand that our health, economy, and way of life is inextricably tied to the health of our waters. We are all too aware of the lasting impact that natural disasters have on our coastal communities and the fisheries they rely on. Long after a storm has passed, our communities are left picking up the pieces. Without expedited support, bolstering and restoring our economies can be difficult. We work diligently to protect the health of our fisheries, and our communities understand that strong fisheries and a strong environment translates to a strong economy. However, in the wake of a natural disaster, whether it is a major storm or a harmful red tide, it is impossible to continue to effectively utilize the resource. In these instances, it is necessary to quickly support the communities that rely on our fisheries. It is for this reason that SCCF supports the passage of the Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act (FISHER Act).

After Hurricane Ian our community experienced firsthand the devastation that follows a natural disaster. The outpouring of support we witnessed after the storm was truly phenomenal, with State and Federal agencies working together to ensure that relief made its way to those in need. However, even with this unified mission, relief could be slow at times. When a less visible disaster strikes, such as a red tide, the pace of relief can be even slower. By expediting the federal fishery disaster relief funding process and enacting a 30-day decision requirement for OMB to deny or approve the State's spend plan, the time spent recovering from storms could be reduced, and people could return to their jobs.

For those who live, work, and play in coastal communities our lives and livelihoods depend on the resources we utilize and manage. After a disaster strikes, relief is needed quickly to help communities recover. Even with relief, rebuilding is a slow and arduous process, but by passing the FISHER Act one of the hurdles to recovery can be removed. The passage of this act would help those in need get back on their feet and return to fishing, guiding, or otherwise utilizing our unique and healthy fisheries.

Sincerely,

James Evans
CEO