



03/06/2024

The Honorable Garret Graves
U.S. House of Representatives
2077 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Graves,

The Charter Fishermans Association is a gulf-wide federally permitted For-hire industry advocacy group with members in all five Gulf States. The Destin Charter Boat Association represents the federally permitted For-hire fishing fleet out of Destin, Florida. The Florida Guides Association represents state and federally permitted fishing business from across the entire State of Florida. The Alabama Charter Fishing Association represents the federally permitted For-hire fishing fleet from the State of Alabama. The Panama City Boatmens Association represents the federally permitted For-hire fishing fleet out of Panama City, Florida.

We are writing today in the support of the "Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act". In the Gulf, we have more recreational stakeholders than any other regional management area in the nation. And with the continued population of Americans that are moving to the Gulf coasts interest in marine and deep-sea fisheries continues to grow.

The Gulf has a vast amount of area suitable to support habitat for the Reef and Pelagic fish complexes. Multiple states in the Gulf have artificial reef programs which continue to try to enhance habitat and angling opportunities for its citizens. This Act is a welcome change from programs such as "Idle Iron" which were counter intuitive to these efforts. Decommissioning and removing these structures in a non-ecological mindset have hampered efforts to create more habitat for our nation's resources in the Gulf.

Your proposed Act would help ensure that federal agencies would have to apply that ecological mindset when addressing regulatory issues and balance them with the needs of the nation's fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. This will align agencies actions with all regional management areas that desire to grow and maintain healthy fish stocks and create more biomass which is imperative for not just the recreational enjoyment of fishing in the Gulf but also the commercial fisheries which the nation relies upon for sustainably caught wild seafood.

With, all of the signed associations whole heartedly support your efforts in protecting the unforeseen benefits of the oil and gas industries infrastructures, and pledge to continue to work with you and your colleagues to get legislation like the "Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act" passed for the betterment of our nation's resources while providing more angling opportunities.

Sincerely,

Capt. Jim Green
President
Charter Fishermans Association

Mrs. Kelia Paul
President
Panama City Boatmens Association

Capt. Jason Klosterman
Vice President
Destin Charter Boat Association

Capt. Dylan Hubbard
President
Florida Guides Association

Capt. Dale Woodruff
President
Alabama Charter Fishing Association