

September 11, 2018

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy,

The undersigned organizations ask you to oppose any legislation in the Senate that would weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), including S. 1520 (the so-called "Modern Fish Act").

In the 40 years since the Magnuson-Stevens Act was passed, the statute has been a hallmark of cooperation, bipartisanship and science-based fisheries management. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 44 commercially and recreationally important fish stocks have rebuilt to healthy population levels since 2000, leading to more fish in the water and better fishing opportunities.

However, H.R. 200, a bill to reauthorize and amend the Act that recently passed in the House of Representatives, threatens the progress made under the Magnuson-Stevens Act and casts into doubt the future of healthy fish populations. It would significantly weaken the law's conservation provisions by creating loopholes, watering down legal standards, and decreasing accountability. It is the House's third largely partisan attempt to craft a reauthorization bill in recent years.

Our groups all work in different ways to protect and preserve Connecticut's natural environment. At the same time, we have a common interest in a healthy Long Island Sound and Atlantic Ocean, which are part of our shared natural and cultural heritage. Thousands of jobs in the tourism, fishing and recreation sectors also depend on healthy and abundant fish and wildlife. A strong Magnuson-Stevens Act is thus important for all of our groups, our members and the citizens of Connecticut more generally.

We urge you and the other members of the Senate to work together to find broadly-supported bipartisan solutions to the remaining challenges of fisheries management. To help ensure that future generations can enjoy healthy fish populations, Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization should build on the progress we have made, not undermine it. The challenges of managing shifting stocks responding to climate change, for example, can and should be addressed without weakening the law's core conservation provisions.

Enacting H.R. 200, S. 1520 or any bill that rolls back rebuilding and accountability requirements and increases the risk of overfishing would threaten the remarkable progress we have made and take us back to the days of cascading fishery disasters and plummeting fish populations. We urge you to oppose any such legislation.

Sincerely yours,

Adrienne Esposito
Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Curt Johnson
President
CFE/Save the Sound

Patrick Comins
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Connecticut Audubon Society

Lori Brown
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Lynn Werner
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Louise Washer
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Margaret Miner
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