

September 9, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Senate
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
United States Senate
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington DC 20515

Dear Leader Reid; Minority Leader McConnell; Speaker Boehner; and Minority Leader Pelosi:

As business leaders who depend on healthy marine fisheries resources and sound fisheries management, we are keenly interested in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). We believe MSA reauthorization provides an opportunity to develop a saltwater recreational fisheries management system that produces the full range of saltwater recreational fishing's economic, social and conservation benefits to the nation. We ask that you help ensure that our community's priorities are included in MSA as it moves toward reauthorization.

Saltwater recreational fishing has a \$70 billion impact on our nation's economy, supporting 454,000 jobs. Coastal communities throughout the country depend – in some cases, exclusively – on recreational fishing and boating for their livelihoods. In addition, the recreational fishing and boating community provides the bulk of funding for aquatic resource conservation through excise taxes, fishing license fees and direct donations which total approximately \$1.5 billion annually. Anglers, boaters and industry willingly provide these contributions because of the strong conservation ethic that runs throughout the sport.

Our community's priorities for MSA reauthorization are described in the Commission on Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Management's landmark report, *A Vision for Managing America's Saltwater Recreational Fisheries*. During 2013, members of the Commission met to deliberate and debate strategies to improve saltwater recreational fisheries management, culminating in the report, which identifies six key policies that would achieve the commission's vision.

The recommendations offered by the Commission on Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Management, commonly known as the Morris-Deal Commission, include:

- Establishing a national policy for recreational fishing
- Adopting a revised approach to saltwater recreational fisheries management
- Allocating marine fisheries for the greatest benefit to the nation
- Creating reasonable latitude in stock rebuilding timelines
- Codifying a process for cooperative management
- Managing for the forage base

Since its original passage in 1976, MSA has made notable progress in ending overfishing, rebuilding depleted fish stocks, conserving essential fish habitat and a variety of other improvements to the nation's marine resources. However, despite its significant socioeconomic, cultural and conservation values, recreational fishing's importance is still not proportionally reflected in the MSA or the resultant federal marine fisheries management process, which remain primarily focused on commercial fishing. We urge you not to allow this MSA reauthorization to pass without addressing the recreational fishing and boating community's priorities and developing a saltwater management system that meets the needs of the recreational fishing and boating community.

Sincerely,

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