



December 16, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Senate Environment and Public Works
Committee
405 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
Senate Environment and Public Works
Committee
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,

On behalf of the nation's recreational fishing industry, the American Sportfishing Association (ASA) thanks you for introducing S. 3051, America's Conservation Enhancement Act, and urges swift consideration and passage of this bill through the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

The American Sportfishing Association is the sportfishing industry's trade association, committed to representing the interests of the entire sportfishing community. We represent manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers of fishing equipment and accessories, as well as outdoor media, fishing organizations and agencies. We give the industry a unified voice, speaking out when emerging laws and policies could significantly affect sportfishing business or sportfishing itself. The nation's 49 million recreational fishermen have a \$125 billion a year economic impact and support over 800,000 jobs.

We are extremely appreciative of the hard work of you and your staff in putting together this bipartisan package of bills that will support natural resource conservation and benefit recreational fishing opportunities throughout the country.

Provisions within S. 3051 of particular importance to ASA include:

- Title III, the National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act: This title is near-identical to a bill introduced earlier this year by Sens. Crapo & Cardin (S. 754), and language that passed the House last week as part of H.R. 729. Supported by the state fish & wildlife agencies and dozens of fisheries organizations, it authorizes a highly successful USFWS program that has helped conduct hundreds of fish habitat restoration projects throughout the country, all for the benefit of fisheries conservation and sportfishing opportunities. The National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships Act would provide long-overdue Congressional authorization, making several improvements to the structure and function of the program.
- Sec. 108, Modification of definition of sport fishing equipment under Toxic Substances Control Act: This section would follow through on several years of similar, bipartisan language in the appropriations bills, providing fishing tackle with a similar exemption as currently exists in statute for ammunition. Periodically, the EPA is petitioned to ban fishing equipment containing lead, despite having no scientific basis. Thankfully the Obama Administration rejected the most recent petition in 2010, but the sportfishing industry and the nation's 49 million anglers are seeking certainty against future unwarranted petitions.

AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION

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- Secs. 109-111, Chesapeake Bay conservation: These three sections collectively authorize or reauthorize important programs related to the health and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, which is not only critical to the recreational fishing community around the Bay itself, but also to the entire Mid-Atlantic region, as the Bay is an important nursery for migratory fish like striped bass.
- Sec. 112, Great Lakes monitoring, assessment, science, and research: The USGS conducts biological assessments that serve as the foundation for fishery management decisions made by federal, state, and tribal agencies. The USGS's work is essential but, because of a governance nuance for freshwater, the function has operated without an explicit authorization. This section, which is modelled after the Great Lakes Fishery Research Authorization Act (S. 446), will help ensure uninterrupted delivery of basinwide biological assessments and monitoring, support the deployment of new technologies for better fishery management, and improve the multi-billion Great Lakes fishery.

This legislative package contains many other bills that will support our nation's natural resources and sportsmen's access. Thank you again for your continued leadership to improve federal management and conservation of the nation's public lands and waters.

Sincerely,



Mike Leonard
Vice President, Government Affairs