



ASA CONGRESSIONAL PRIORITIES

During this extremely difficult time in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, recreational fishing can provide an ideal way for individuals and families to get some fresh air, recreation and food while maintaining safe social distance. However, as with nearly all parts of the U.S. economy, the recreational fishing industry continues to face significant challenges that require Congressional relief.

Amid the COVID-10 pandemic, recreational fishing is currently allowed in most parts of the country. However, since the start of stay at home orders and business closures in mid-March, the sportfishing industry has been shut down or limited in distribution or production, payments have been delayed and orders have not been able to be filled.

ACTION NEEDED FROM CONGRESS

Ensure Small Business Administration (SBA) relief programs, such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loans, are sufficiently funded. Over 90 percent of ASA members are small businesses, and these SBA programs are critical to maintain payroll and keep business operations going despite the economic disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delay the payment due date for the federal excise tax on sportfishing equipment.

A 10% excise tax is imposed on the manufacturers of most sportfishing products, due quarterly to the IRS. The industry pays the excise tax willingly, knowing that the tax is put to good use to fund fisheries conservation and public access projects. However, delaying the payment due date by a minimum of 90 days would provide significant relief for these companies.

Provide additional relief funds to the marine recreational fishing industry.

The CARES Act included \$300 million to the Secretary of Commerce to provide assistance to “fishery participants,” which includes the recreational fishing industry (e.g., coastal tackle shops, marinas, charter fishing operators). However, given the magnitude of economic harm to both the recreational and commercial fishing industries, substantially more funds are needed. ASA supports an additional \$1.5 billion for relief to fishery participants.

Make 501(c)(6) organizations eligible for PPP loans.

Trade associations like ASA serve to assist our members on areas of shared interest and, especially in times like this, provide guidance and resources to help small businesses survive. As conferences and events are postponed or cancelled, and contributions become uncertain, finding funds to continue operations and maintain payroll is an increasingly dire issue. Allowing 501(c)(6) non-profits to access PPP loans would allow us to continue to support the businesses we represent.



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PASS THE FOLLOWING BILLS

The Great American Outdoors Act would provide improved public access by funding the backlog of maintenance for roads, trails, piers, campsites, parking lots, boat ramps, and other recreational infrastructure. As visitors return to our parks and public lands, Congress can ensure these special places will be safe, accessible and ready to help generate tourist dollars in local communities.

America's Conservation Enhancement Act includes numerous high-priority conservation provisions that will leverage public and private funding as well as lead to significant job creation. This strongly bipartisan bill, which passed the U.S. Senate unanimously, would benefit fish and wildlife conservation and management throughout the country.

America's Water Infrastructure Act, which was recently released by leaders of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, authorizes a wide range of projects and studies to improve the conservation and management of the nation's waterways. The policies set forth in this bill are vital to create jobs and help struggling communities across the country who depend on access to healthy waterways.

The Sport Fish Restoration and Recreational Boating Safety Act would reauthorize the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund through 2024 and make important administrative adjustments to improve the efficiency of the program. Since its inception in 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration program has provided billions of dollars to fund fisheries conservation and public access to aquatic resources, providing opportunities for the nation's recreational fishermen to enjoy time on the water.



The American Sportfishing Association (ASA) is the trade association representing the recreational fishing industry, including sportfishing equipment manufacturers, distributors, retailers and outdoors media. The nation's 50 million recreational fishermen contribute \$125 billion annually to the economy, supporting over 800,000 jobs.