November 9, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leader Thune, and Leader Schumer:

The undersigned organizations representing recreational anglers, boaters, and the businesses that serve them urge you to enact the following priorities before the end of the 119th Congress. Recreational fishing and boating depend on healthy fisheries and access to public waters, and our community helps fund their conservation through dedicated taxes. Each year, 57 million Americans go fishing, supporting more than $230 billion in economic output nationwide. During the lame duck, Congress can support this important component of America's culture and economy by advancing the following legislation to conserve fish habitat, address predation challenges, and provide dependable funding for state fisheries and boating access programs.

Sport Fish Restoration Reauthorization and Full FY 2027 Funding

Congress must extend the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Program and associated Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund expenditure authority beyond the December 11, 2026, expiration of the current continuing resolution and ensure that states receive their full fiscal year 2027 apportionments. This program turns dedicated revenues from fishing equipment, boating fuel, and related sources into fisheries management, habitat conservation, boating access, and aquatic education. Because the current continuing resolution only authorizes expenditures through December 11, states have access to approximately 20 percent of their FY 2027 SFR apportionments, creating significant challenges for agencies budgeting, staffing, and implementing programs across the full fiscal year. As we work toward a full five-year reauthorization of the fund, we urge Congress to make full-year FY 2027 funding available, even if broader government funding continues under another short-term extension.

SHARKED Act (H.R. 207 / S. 2314)

Shark depredation, when sharks take or damage hooked fish before anglers can land them, is creating increasing challenges for recreational fishermen and fisheries managers. The SHARKED Act would establish a task force of fisheries managers and scientists to coordinate research, recommend management strategies, and develop guidance to help anglers reduce these interactions. It would also prioritize shark depredation in cooperative fisheries research and identify research needs, including nonlethal deterrents. The legislation has already passed the full House, while the Senate companion has advanced through the Senate Commerce Committee.

Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act (H.R. 5745)
Offshore oil and gas platforms can provide valuable habitat for fish and other marine life. The Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act would build on existing Rig-to-Reefs efforts by establishing clearer procedures and timelines for evaluating and converting qualifying inactive structures into artificial reefs. In coordination with state reef programs and with safeguards for navigation and the marine environment, this approach would help retain established habitat as offshore infrastructure is decommissioned. Passage would help protect productive fishing areas and benefit the coastal communities and businesses that depend on them.

Responsible Cormorant Management and Control Act of 2026 (H.R. 8195 / S. 5514)
Fisheries managers need effective tools to address documented impacts of double-crested cormorants on fish populations. This legislation would direct the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, working with regional flyway councils, to develop management frameworks based on the best available science. These frameworks would allow states, Tribes, and other authorized entities to address conflicts while maintaining sustainable cormorant populations. The bill would give managers greater flexibility to protect recreational fisheries and the conservation investments that support them.

Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act of 2026 (H.R. 9621)
The Northwest Endangered Salmon Predation Prevention Act would give state and Tribal fishery managers additional tools to address seal and sea lion predation on vulnerable salmon and steelhead populations. Despite extensive investments in habitat restoration, changes to dam operations, and restrictions on fisheries, many salmon and steelhead populations remain listed under the Endangered Species Act, while marine mammal predation continues to contribute significant mortality. The bill would expand management authority in the Columbia River system and specified Washington waters, while retaining federal permitting and requiring humane removal. It would also support development of nonlethal exclusion technology. These measures would complement habitat restoration and other recovery efforts, helping protect recreational fisheries and the communities that rely on healthy salmon runs.

We urge you to include these priorities in legislation that can reach the President's desk before the 119th Congress adjourns. Enacting them would strengthen fisheries conservation and support the fishing and boating opportunities that our members and their communities depend on.

Thank you for your consideration and your support for recreational fishing, boating, and the conservation of our aquatic resources.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
BoatU.S.
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Center for Coastal Conservation

Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Guy Harvey Foundation
International Game Fish Association
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership