

**Center for Biological Diversity * Conservation Law Foundation * Defenders of Wildlife * Earthjustice *
Environmental Defense Fund * Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center *
Friends of the Earth * Greenpeace * Klamath Forest Alliance * League of Conservation Voters *
National Audubon Society * Natural Resources Defense Council * Northwest Environmental Advocates
* Ocean Conservancy * Ocean River Institute * Oceana * Save the Bay * Save the Sound *
The Humane Society of the United States * The Lands Council * The Pew Charitable Trusts *
World Wildlife Fund**

July 22, 2014

Dear Representative,

The undersigned organizations urge you to vote NO on H.R. 4742, Representative Doc Hastings' bill to reauthorize and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), when it is considered on the House floor. The Magnuson-Stevens Act is working to restore fish populations and fisheries that depend on them. H.R. 4742 would threaten this success and the future of healthy fish populations and sustainable fisheries. If passed, H.R. 4742 would significantly weaken the Magnuson-Stevens Act's conservation provisions by creating loopholes, watering down legal standards, allowing costly delays, and decreasing transparency and accountability.

The previous two Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorizations in 1996 and 2006 were supported by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress and have proven generally very effective at ending overfishing and rebuilding depleted fish populations. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 34 commercially and recreationally important fish stocks have rebuilt to healthy population levels since 2000, while the number of stocks subject to overfishing has been cut in half since 2006, leading to more fish in the water and better fishing opportunities. Improved conservation has led to increased U.S. seafood landings and revenues, which set a 14 year record in 2011, and to a recreational fishing industry that generated \$58 billion in sales impacts in 2012.

If enacted into law, H.R. 4742 would undermine conservation requirements in the current law that are at the root of so much of this success, as well as critical to ongoing efforts to eliminate overfishing, restore still-depleted fish populations, and stabilize coastal communities that were harmed by decades of overfishing. Among other damaging provisions, H.R. 4742 would:

- Roll back the law's successful rebuilding requirements, including by establishing broad loopholes that effectively remove reasonable time limits and allowing short-term economic concerns to trump the long-term economic and ecological health of the nation's fish and fisheries (Sec. 103).
- Remove the law's requirement for annual catch limits for potentially hundreds of species, including some of which may be overfished or subject to overfishing (Sec. 104).
- Exempt federal fishery management plans from the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an important federal planning tool which requires public engagement in management decisions, adequate analysis of environmental impacts on the marine environment, and the consideration of reasonable alternatives and ways of minimizing adverse impacts (Sec. 106).
- Undermine the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by seeking to put fishery management councils in charge of recovering endangered and threatened marine mammals, sea turtles, and other

vulnerable ocean species impacted by fishing. These councils lack the expertise, resources and potentially legal authority to address these critical issues (Sec. 114).

- Weaken efforts to protect and restore the ecological health of our national marine sanctuaries, including areas of essential habitat and critical spawning grounds, by putting fishery management councils in charge of fisheries-related activities in sanctuaries (Sec. 114).
- Make a significant amount of publicly-funded fisheries information off limits to fishery managers, scientists, industry and the public (Sec. 109).

The Magnuson-Stevens Act is working to restore and safeguard our nation's fish populations and marine environment. We must continue to build on this hard-earned success and not turn our backs on the future. We urge you to oppose H.R. 4742 and any similar efforts to undermine U.S. fisheries.

Sincerely,

Miyoko Sakashita
Oceans Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Peter Shelley
Senior Attorney
Conservation Law Foundation

Mary Beth Beetham
Director of Legislative Affairs
Defenders of Wildlife

Marty Hayden
Vice President of Policy and Legislation
Earthjustice

Matt Tinning
Senior Director, U.S. Oceans Program
Environmental Defense Fund

Natalynne DeLapp
Executive Director
Epic-Environmental Protection Information Center

John Kaltenstein
Marine policy analyst
Friends of the Earth

Phil Kline
Senior Ocean Campaigner
Greenpeace

Kimberly Baker
Executive Director
Klamath Forest Alliance

Sara Chieffo
Legislative Director
League of Conservation Voters

Brian Moore
Legislative Director
National Audubon Society

Brad Sewell
Senior Attorney, Oceans Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

Nina Bell
Executive Director
Northwest Environmental Advocates

Ellen Bolen
Director, Fish Conservation Program
Ocean Conservancy

Rob Moir, PhD
Executive Director
Ocean River Institute

Dominique Cano-Stocco
Director, Responsible Fishing Campaign
Oceana

Jonathan F. Stone
Executive Director
Save the Bay, R.I.

Curt Johnson
Executive Director
Save the Sound, a program of CT Fund for the Environment

Sharon B. Young
Marine Issues Field Director
The Humane Society of the United States

Mike Petersen
Executive Director
The Lands Council

Ted Morton
Federal Director, U.S. Oceans
The Pew Charitable Trusts

Roberta Elias
Deputy Director, Marine and Fisheries Policy
World Wildlife Fund