

Preserve Fishing Coalition

An ad hoc group of commercial, recreational
and party/charter fishermen and the
businesses they support



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Senator Charles E. Schumer
Congressman Frank Pallone
Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand
Senator George LeMieux
Congressman John H. Adler
Congressman Robert E. Andrews
Congressman Gus M. Bilirakis
Congressman Timothy H. Bishop
Congresswoman Jo Bonner
Congressman Allen Boyd
Congressman Henry E. Brown
Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite
Congresswoman Donna M. Christensen
Congressman Joe Courtney
Congressman Ander Crenshaw

Congressman Barney Frank
Congressman Walter B. Jones
Congressman Patrick J. Kennedy
Congressman Peter T. King
Congressman Frank LoBiondo
Congressman Mike McIntyre
Congressman John L. Mica
Congressman Michael H. Michaud
Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz
Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter
Congressman Cliff Stearns
Congressman John F. Tierney
Congressman Robert J. Wittman
Congressman Adam Putnam

The Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act of 2009, legislation introduced by Congressman Pallone (HR 1584) with its companion legislation (S 1255) introduced by Senator Schumer, that you are co-sponsoring will be a critical step in the process of allowing independent commercial, recreational and party/charter fishermen and women to once again resume meaningful roles in the fisheries management process; roles that are now effectively denied them as the result of a well-funded and highly-coordinated campaign that has permeated the highest levels of fisheries management at NOAA.

Over the last two decades, multi-billion dollar philanthropic foundations with strong corporate connections have influenced the inclusion of arbitrarily restrictive language in our nation's primary fisheries law, the Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The implementation of this language has caused the loss of thousands of domestic fishing businesses and tens of thousands of jobs. The resulting arbitrary rebuilding timelines and targets have inflicted untold and unnecessary economic loss and hardship on the fishing families that are still holding on. Working through ENGOs and employing their own cadre of advocacy-scientists, these foundations have also underwritten a handful of recreational and commercial fishing organizations to further their apparent goals of marginalizing or destroying the surviving domestic commercial and recreational fishing fleet, commercial and recreational boat manufacturers, tackle retailers and all other sectors of the fishing-dependent marine industry in the United States.

Additionally they have used their seemingly endless financial resources to gain control of print and broadcast media to the extent that the fishermen are now believed to be incapable of objectively participating in the fisheries management process unless they have the approval of those foundations or their paid minions. This is a 180 degree departure from the intent of the Magnuson Act as originally passed, which specifically included fishermen in the management process to balance the lack of precision in fisheries science with their

on-the-water experience. That imprecision is still and will always be with us and independent fishermen's participation in the management process should be as well.

Lost in the spin is the fact that most US fisheries are recovered, sustainable and growing. Lost too are fishing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of US fishermen, and the ability of millions of American consumers to enjoy locally-caught seafood.

Fisheries that have endured for generations are being arbitrarily restricted and in some cases drastically restructured. Dramatic rebuilding in many of our fisheries demonstrates such restructuring isn't necessary, nor is the human suffering and economic devastation that accompanies it warranted.

The increase in our seafood trade deficit, which went from \$6 billion in 2000 to \$9 billion in 2008 and is still rising, is in the largest part due to the unnecessarily harsh and inflexible management regime that is now afflicting our fishermen.

We thank you for your perception and for your continuing support and we urge other Legislators to sign on as co-sponsors of HR 1584 and S 1255 as well. In addition, we urge you to support Congressman Mica's bill (HR 3307) which would improve the red snapper assessment and provide much needed relief to the fishing communities of the South Atlantic.