



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Committee Approves Legislation to Strengthen and Improve Our Nation's Fisheries

Fishing Supports 1.3 Million U.S. Jobs & Contributes to an America that Works

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today the House Natural Resources Committee approved H.R. 4742, the [Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act](#) by a bipartisan vote of 24-17. This legislation would renew and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (last reauthorized in 2006 and expired in 2013) to ensure that this fundamentally sound legislation works in the best interest of both fish and fishermen.

“Congress should be focused on policies that promote an America that works – and when over a million Americans’ jobs are tied to fishing, whether commercial or recreational fishing, renewing and improving the Magnuson-Stevens Act should be a priority. The goal of HR 4742 is to strengthen and improve the Act through common sense reforms that increase management flexibility based on science, ensure greater government transparency, promote responsible fishing and prevent overfishing, improve fish data collection, and provide predictability and certainty for American jobs and local communities whose economic livelihoods depend on fishing,” **said Chairman Hastings.** *“I continue to be open to working with the Ranking Member, members of the Committee on both sides of the aisle, and with Members from New England and the Gulf who are struggling with real fishing challenges.”*

Since 2011, the Committee has held ten hearings and heard from almost 100 witnesses relating to the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act about how this Act can be improved. H.R. 4742 is the culmination of all these recommendations that ultimately strengthen and improve the Magnuson-Stevens Act to ensure that there is a proper balance between the biological needs of fish and the economic needs of fishermen.

Specifically, this bill makes the following improvements to the Act:

- Provides science-based flexibility measures for fishery managers when rebuilding depleted fisheries
- Provides common sense flexibility measures for fishery managers when setting annual catch limits

- Provides more transparency for fishermen and others in both science and management
- Provides a schedule for obtaining better fishery dependent and fishery independent data especially for data poor fisheries and provides greater protection for confidential information submitted to regulatory agencies
- Encourages and promotes cooperative research projects where scientists work with fishermen to develop sound scientific information
- Allows fishery managers to take environmental conditions and economic impacts of their decisions into account when establishing harvest levels
- Allows fishermen in regions where catch share programs have been controversial to have a say in whether a new catch share program will be implemented and to be provided better information when considering such a program
- Requires NOAA to provide better accountability on how fees are collected and used
- Clarifies the role of the Magnuson-Stevens Act in relationship to other Federal statutes
- Authorizes appropriations for an additional five fiscal years at current funding level

For more information on the Committee's efforts to ensure that the Magnuson-Stevens Act is working in the best interests of fish and fishermen, please click [here](#).

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