



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, May 07, 2013
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Chairman Hastings Discusses Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization at Annual Fisheries Conference

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA -04) spoke at the third annual Managing Our Nation’s Fisheries Conference coordinated by the Regional Fishery Management Councils and hosted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. During his remarks, Chairman Hastings discussed the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, President Obama’s National Ocean Policy, and the need to update the Endangered Species Act.

Below are excerpts from Chairman Hastings’ speech. [Click here](#) to read the full text.

Balance and Flexibility

“Managing fish - and fishermen - is a challenge. It requires balancing act in a number of areas: between a sustainable harvest level and the maximum economic value for the fisheries; between recreational and commercial users of the same resource; between different gear types in the same fisheries; and between the interests of different states. In addition, not only are the fisheries different, but the challenges are different in each region of the country. Because of these differences, a one-size-fits-all management structure is not the most efficient structure.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act provides the framework for sustainable fisheries management that allows for regional solutions to address regional challenges. The Act works, it is absolutely necessary to maintain this authority that allows regions to find unique solutions to their problems. Because of this framework the United States has arguably the best managed fisheries in the world.”

Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization

“It is Congress’ responsibility to re-examine and reauthorize the laws that we create and the current authorization for the Magnuson-Stevens Act expires at the end of Fiscal Year 2013. The time for Congress to work on this reauthorization is now.

As Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee – the House Committee with jurisdiction over the Magnuson- Stevens Act - I have already begun the reauthorization process with several hearings in the last Congress and, in March, the first of several hearings we will hold this year. It is my goal is to try and reauthorize this important statute this Congress... We are in the process of scheduling our next hearing on the reauthorization and it will be

formally announced soon. It will be on data collection issues and it will be held on May 21st, but there are other issues that need to be addressed at further future hearings.”

Science and Technology

“When fishermen lose confidence in the science that is being used to regulate their activities, they are less likely to support management changes – especially if those changes restrict their activities. There has got to be a better way to get up-to-date, accurate data on the fishery resources and on the harvest levels – both for recreational and commercial fisheries. Congress started this process in 2006 by requiring an overhaul of the recreation data collection process. Unfortunately, that data collection process is still underway.”

Transparency

“The Act requires robust public participation and a very transparent process to be effective. The transparency aspect need to be further examined. While some of you may not like some Councils’ decisions, I suspect you would much prefer working through the Council system than having someone in Washington, D.C. - who may know little or nothing about your fishery - making decisions about your livelihood.”

National Ocean Policy

“As many of you are aware, the Obama Administration released an executive order in 2010 that created a National Ocean Policy. The Administration decided to sidestep the legislative process despite the fact that four Congresses had considered legislation to create a very similar ocean policy and created the National Ocean Policy by executive order and without statutory authority. Not only does this Policy add new policy goals and requirements for federal agencies to meet when permitting activities, it creates a new level of bureaucracy that will certainly add more hoops for all Americans to jump through.”

Endangered Species Act

“One of the other laws that is requiring a great deal of focus this Congress is the Endangered Species Act, which was last authorized by Congress nearly 25 years ago. This law has done more to keep environmental lawyers in business than it has to recover species or to balance the needs of average Americans.

Aside from the burdens created by the ESA, to most objective observers, the law is failing to achieve even its primary purpose of species recovery. Federal agencies charged with its implementation every year spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars under the rubric of ‘endangered species recovery.’ Yet, the law, over the past 40 years has only achieved, at best, a one or two percent recovery rate.”

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