



Key Issues for 116th Congress

Support H.R. 788/S.1008 – The Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act of 2019

These two bills would require countries that export shark/ ray products into the U.S. to meet the same conservation and management standards as our U.S. fishermen. This legislation recognizes and rewards U.S. fishermen for their conservation sacrifices and supports economic viability of U.S. fishermen and coastal communities. The bills will also add skate and ray species to the existing U.S. seafood import monitoring program (SIMP) to help promote global skate/ ray conservation and management. **We OPPOSE three bills -- H.R. 737/H.R. 614/S.877 – The Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act. These bills would ban the trade and possession of the fins of legally harvested sharks/rays which hurts American fishermen working a sustainable and accountable fishery.** The bills would remove up to 50% of the harvest value of a fishing trip from law abiding U.S. fishermen and will have zero impact on illegal, unregulated, unreported shark/ ray fisheries globally because the U.S. commercial shark fishery, the 8th largest in the world, accounts for <1% of the global shark fin trade.

Equitable Fishery Allocations

Commercial fisheries are the only safe and approved way to provide seafood to the American consumer, including for those citizens without access to catching their own seafood. All commercial catch is regulated and reported under a suite of state and federal laws and is strictly enforced with substantial penalties for noncompliance. By comparison, recreational harvest is not held to the same consumer safety and reporting standards. Also, recreational catch estimates extrapolated from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) are likely inaccurate. The recreational effort survey calibration absurdly compounds MRIP catch estimates in some case by 3 to 6 times. Fish stocks cannot be assessed properly using inaccurate recreational catch estimates and thus, the subsequent allocation of these resources by the Councils cannot be based on unreliable catch estimates and biased economic data. The recreational sector must be held accountable for all seafood resources being taken or U.S. consumers will be disadvantaged.

Forage Fish Legislation

We are opposed to national forage fish legislation designed to require formal management of all species of baitfish in order to feed all marine predators including fish, marine mammals and sea birds. The MSFCMA process already provides the Councils with adequate ecosystem-based management capabilities without forcing specific programmatic requirements to assess the needs of all predators in the ocean. National forage fish legislation is unnecessary and will lead to litigation of the entire marine food web by the national sportfish lobby and the ENGOS.

Aquaculture Legislation

We support aquaculture operations that: (1) do not threaten nor have the potential to threaten - proven by scientific and empirical data - the wild harvest commercial fishing industry and dependent coastal communities; and (2) that will not degrade the quality of our marine environment or negatively impact our precious natural resources. We also support the continued scientific research on the impacts of aquaculture operations, and the study of the effects of (and consequences from) past/present aquaculture systems on the marine environment and the wild harvest industry. There are myriad issues related to siting of offshore aquaculture operations, impacts on protected species, impacts on domestic seafood market share and trade balance, a shifting of the S-K grants focus, and implications on NOAA's budget and science activities to provide adequate and timely stock assessments to ensure we achieve optimum yield from our domestic wild harvest fisheries.



Key Issues for 116th Congress

[The Impacts of Trade Negotiations on the FL Seafood Industry](#)

We support U.S. efforts to rebalance trade relations with our major partners to finally provide a level field for U.S. products. However, we remain concerned about the negative impacts this process is having on some of our key seafood products including but not limited to Florida spiny lobster, one of the State's largest and most valuable commercial fisheries. Just like with our farmers, consideration should be afforded to the FL commercial fishermen, docks, fish houses and coastal communities that are heavily engaged in this important fishery.

[Saltonstall-Kennedy Act \(S-K\) Reform](#)

The S-K program was founded to provide grants to help promote U.S. seafood products. While we support legislation to reform the S-K grant program to provide the commercial fishing industry a greater leadership role in program implementation, we do NOT support expanding the program to include recreational fishing interests; nor do we support removing the term "seafood industry" from the Act and replacing it with "fishing community", thereby giving ENGOs who do not have the best interests of the U.S. seafood industry at heart a role in the grant approval and steering committee process.

[The Young Fishermen's Development Act of 2019](#)

We support an inclusive transparent national grant program that helps commercial fishermen equally in all fisheries and commercial fishing and seafood associations from all regions, regardless of the age or level of experience of fishermen, and whether such fishermen and associations are funded by environmental NGOs. There should be no grant prioritization for NGO-backed fishermen or such groups.

[Magnuson-Stevens Act Reform](#)

We support Magnuson-Stevens Fishery and Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) reform to restore the original intent of the law that specified balanced sector seat designations on Regional Fishery Management Councils. Congress and NOAA must ensure Council seats are filled in a fair and balanced way to ensure process integrity. The MSA was not reauthorized in the 115th Congress and we remain in need of reform to provide for balanced representation, to restore flexibility and improve our management system, and to ensure we are achieving optimum yield from our fisheries on a continuing basis.

[Red Snapper in the South Atlantic & Gulf of Mexico](#)

SFA believes that the allocations of red snapper should be divided equitably. Commercial fishermen are the sole providers of red snapper to the general public. They operate under strict regulations, including IFQs based on historical data and heavy regulations, including a 3-hour lead time for law enforcement to examine any commercial fishermen bringing red snapper to dock. Recreational fishermen are under no such regulation, and their catch is only estimated. Allocations should be based on real, accurate data. Increases in total ACL should take into consideration allowing new entries into the commercial sector, which would create new jobs and help spread the catch shares out among fishermen. Equitable shares between the commercial and recreational sectors is the best way to ensure access to seafood for all.