



## NEWS RELEASE

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Contact:

ASA [Mary Jane Williamson](#) 703.519.9691x227

IGFA [Jason Schratwieser](#), 954.927.2628

NMMA [Lauren Dunn](#) 202.737-9752

CCA [Ted Venker](#), 713.626.4234

CSF [Cole Henry](#) 202.543.6850 X19

GHOFF [Tony Fins](#) 800.288.1227

Center [Jeff Angers](#) 225.382.3755

TBF [Andrew Cox](#) (954) 938-0150

## Recreational Fishing and Boating Community Underwhelmed By House Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization Bill

*Despite some improvements, many of the community's top priorities are not addressed*

**Washington, D.C. – May 29, 2014** – As Congress continues exploring reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act), the primary law governing U.S. marine fisheries management, the recreational fishing and boating community continues to seek substantive legislative changes that will improve saltwater recreational fisheries management. The House Natural Resources Committee today approved a Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization bill, H.R. 4742, the “Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act,” which received mixed reviews from recreational fishing and boating community leaders.

“While we appreciate Chairman Doc Hasting’s interest and efforts in Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization, we would like to have seen more done in this bill to address the needs of the recreational fishing community,” said Mike Nussman, president and CEO of the American Sportfishing Association. “This bill includes several provisions that we support, such as easing the strict implementation of annual catch limits and improving stock assessments for data poor fisheries, but unfortunately our top priorities are not meaningfully addressed.”

During 2013, members of the Commission on Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Management met to deliberate and debate strategies to improve saltwater recreational fisheries management, culminating in the commission’s report, [A Vision for Managing America’s Saltwater Recreational Fisheries](#), which identifies six key policies that would achieve the commission’s vision. Those recommendations primarily focus on Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization.

Co-chaired by Johnny Morris, founder and CEO, [Bass Pro Shops](#), and Scott Deal, president, [Maverick Boats](#), the commission’s report incorporated input from a wide range of experts and other stakeholders, including economists, scientists, federal and state agency administrators, conservationists, charter captains and individual recreational anglers.

“Since its inception, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has focused primarily on commercial fisheries to the detriment of the nation’s 11 million recreational fishermen and the nearly half a million jobs they support,” said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Coastal Conservation. “Revising the law in a way that incorporates the goals and needs of anglers is long overdue. Our community has put forward the

policy changes that will set the foundation for an effective saltwater fisheries management system, but we need Congress' help by enacting these common sense and non-partisan policies.”

The recommendations offered by the Commission on Saltwater Recreational Fisheries Management, commonly known as the Morris-Deal Commission, include:

- Establishing a national policy for recreational fishing
- Adopting a revised approach to saltwater recreational fisheries management
- Allocating marine fisheries for the greatest benefit to the nation
- Creating reasonable latitude in stock rebuilding timelines
- Codifying a process for cooperative management
- Managing for the forage base

“In addition to overlooking the priorities of the Morris-Deal Commission, we are also disappointed that the federal management failure with red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico is not resolved in H.R. 4742,” said Patrick Murray, president of the Coastal Conservation Association. “A comprehensive overhaul of red snapper management is the only way to get us out of this mess. It’s vital that Magnuson-Stevens reauthorization addresses this management train-wreck by transferring Gulf red snapper management over to the states, which are much better equipped to successfully manage this important fishery.”

After passing out of committee, H.R. 4742 now awaits a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives. The Senate Commerce Committee is expected to unveil its Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization bill in the near future. With limited floor time before the November elections, many experts believe that full Magnuson-Stevens reauthorization may not occur until the next session of Congress.

“We understand that Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization likely has a long road ahead before a final bill gets signed into law, so we are hopeful that working with our friends in Congress, we can get the recreational fishing and boating community’s priorities addressed,” said Angers. “We’ve been waiting a long time to bring focus toward improving saltwater recreational fisheries management, and there’s too much at stake to let this reauthorization pass without making the necessary changes that will establish a management system that works for – not against – recreational fishermen.”

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