



Center For Sustainable Fisheries

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A science based non-profit organization devoted to the conservation of our fisheries resources and the economic development of our fishing communities.

ADMINISTRATION

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Dear Friend,

On behalf of the Center for Sustainable Fisheries (CSF) and the National Fisherman I would like to invite you to a public workshop on reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) at the Renaissance Hotel in Seattle at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, February 11, 2014. Our workshop is scheduled just after the Pacific Council meeting to be convenient for those attending the Council meeting.

As you know, the MSA is up for reauthorization this year. Several months ago there was a general feeling that the existing law would be changed very little. This would constrain fisheries-management improvements that would arise from the new language.

However things have changed. It appears that substantive changes are being contemplated by Congress.

There are at least two documents that provide rewritten language and an analysis of the changes. On November 20, 2013, I gave a keynote speech at the Pacific Marine Expo providing CSF's rewritten National Standards that provide a conceptual backbone for the MSA. On December 18, 2013, the House Committee on Insular Affairs issued a Discussion Draft that provided modified or new language for the MSA. On January 14, 2014 CSF issued an analysis of the Discussion Draft.

The links to the papers cited above are below.

Our rewrite of the National Standards changed the current National Standard 1 from focusing on primarily preventing overfishing and secondarily obtaining optimum yield to focusing on maximizing (multispecies) yield or an economic function of yield subject to constraints on fishing mortality as determined by the fisheries management council. We see this change as strengthening the economic component of fisheries management, giving more flexibility to councils, and facilitating better "science." At the same time our rewrite provides for institutional changes such as National Institutes for Fisheries Research and a National Fisheries Management Board that reports to Congress and provides checks and balances for the fisheries management process.

The Discussion Draft, among other things, changes the term "overfished" to "depleted" and suppresses the "ten year rebuilding period" for overfished stocks. Our analysis of the Discussion Draft points to these pluses along with others. At the same time we point to the need to replace the present National Standards with wording that facilitates scientific interpretation and achieves balance among biological and economic objectives rather than the current implementation that focuses primarily on "overfishing" while holding the other National Standards in abeyance.

So there is a lot going on. What is going on is happening at various intensities around the Nation. Some believe that extensive change is necessary whereas others believe minor or no changes are necessary. This means that whatever your position, whether you are for change or not for change, it is time to put your oar in the water. The MSA Reauthorization is too important to not become involved.

This is why we think that you will share our view that it is important to convene a series of workshops around the country to discuss reauthorization and put various views on the table.

At our workshop in Seattle we plan on reviewing the documents cited above. In addition to this review we plan on providing you with substantive information on the state of fisheries management and how this state of fisheries management tempers the direction of any rewrite.

Most importantly we would like to use the workshop to hear from you regarding your views so that they can be used to guide our future activities. We also hope to hear from Pacific Northwest/Alaska elected officials or their staffs regarding the progress and plans for the reauthorization.

We look forward to seeing you at the workshop and discussing the MSA Reauthorization.

Best Regards,

Brian J. Rothschild
CSF, President and CEO

Jessica Hathaway
National Fisherman, Editor in Chief

MSA Reauthorization Policy Paper: <http://centerforsustainablefisheries.org/wp-content/uploads/MSA-Reauthorization-Policy-Paper.pdf>

Congressman Hastings's Discussion Draft: <http://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/magnusonstevensactdiscussiondraft-113.pdf>

Review and Comments on the Discussion Draft: <http://centerforsustainablefisheries.org/wp-content/uploads/CSF-Comments-on-Congressman-Hastings-Discussion-Draft.pdf>