



December 12, 2017

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

We write to request your consideration of additional industry perspectives on the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). We represent companies involved in a variety of roles within the seafood supply chain, including suppliers, distributors, retail, restaurants, meal kits and food service companies. Sourcing and providing sustainable seafood is fundamental to our businesses, and we are committed to the highest standards of corporate and social responsibility. We have made significant investments to support seafood sustainability – in the United

States and abroad – and therefore we take great interest in any proposed changes that could weaken or undermine the MSA.

Over the last several months, your committees held several hearings to gather testimony and proposals related to reauthorization. We note that while a number of witnesses have been invited to testify, they predominantly represented harvesters, processors and recreational fishing interests. To our knowledge, there have been no witnesses representing the rest of the supply chain, and no representatives from foodservice companies, suppliers, distributors, retailers, restaurants or chefs. For that reason, we believe it is extremely important to provide the committees with this broader industry perspective as you consider legislation that could impact tens of thousands of jobs¹ across the United States.

While discussions surrounding the MSA reauthorization tend to focus on optimizing the harvest and management of our domestic fisheries, the statute has global influence. The MSA sets the bar for science-based management, transparency and accountability, and has influenced Regional Fisheries Management Organizations and other international bodies to adopt consistent measures and enforce them. International reforms will help mitigate global challenges with seafood, such as overfishing, food security, national security and human rights. With over 90% of seafood in the United States coming from imports, the MSA plays an important role to push international management toward more sustainable and transparent policies, and increase availability of products that achieve appropriate standards for environmental, legal and social responsibility demanded by U.S. consumers.

As you consider reauthorization of the MSA, we would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. **Maintain the U.S. competitive advantage in the marketplace.** U.S. fisheries are recognized as some of the best managed in the world, and this has created a competitive advantage for U.S. seafood products in the marketplace. Amendments to the MSA must ensure that U.S. fisheries continue this competitive advantage by maintaining or strengthening conservation standards, not weakening them.
2. **Maintain an appropriate balance between resource access and conservation.** Recent calls for additional access to fisheries resources must be balanced by the underlying conservation needs of the species and the ecosystem. We support increased access to U.S. fisheries where possible, but amendments to the MSA should not undermine the fundamental provisions of science-based management, particularly the requirements to end overfishing, rebuild stocks and ensure accountability through annual catch limits that are needed to maintain sustainable populations.
3. **Maintain the transparent, stakeholder-driven regional management system for federal stocks.** The MSA rests on the foundation of a regional approach to managing federal fish stocks that encourages the participation of relevant states, industry, recreational interests, scientists and

¹ The recently published [Fisheries of the United States 2016](#) identifies over 26,000 jobs associated with U.S. seafood wholesalers. This full impact on U.S. jobs is likely significantly higher than this figure if you include jobs throughout the rest of the supply chain (retail, hotels, foodservice, restaurants, etc.).

the public. Congress should maintain this system and continue to direct management of federal stocks through this balanced and inclusive process.

4. **Support new programs to enhance market opportunities for U.S. sustainable seafood.** As the number of sustainable fisheries increases in the United States, there are new seafood products that meet the highest standards for sustainability but lack a local, regional or national market. We support amendments that would enhance marketing and community-based fishing initiatives (i.e., quota banks, community-supported fisheries), as well as increased priority and grant opportunities for related programs, such as training (i.e., observers), technology development (i.e., electronic monitoring, bycatch mitigation) and research (i.e., expand data collection, cooperative research). These programs will incentivize innovation, efficiency and opportunities to reduce costs and increase prices for sustainable U.S. fisheries.

The MSA has been remarkably successful in recovering and maintaining U.S. fisheries over the last decade, and we urge Congress to carefully consider any changes that would undermine U.S. fisheries management and lower the bar for global sustainability and competitiveness. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to continued discussions on MSA reauthorization.

Sincerely,



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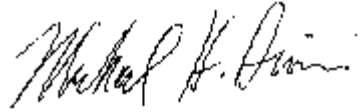
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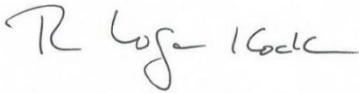
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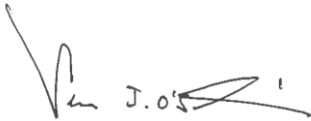
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