



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Chairman Hastings Seeks Public Input on Draft Plan to Strengthen and Improve our Nation's Fisheries

*Unveils Draft Proposal to Reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
Conservation and Management Act*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) today unveiled a draft proposal to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which was last authorized by Congress in 2006 through fiscal year 2013. The draft proposal, H.R. ____ [Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act](#), would renew and amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act - which governs the recreational and commercial harvest of fisheries in Federal waters - to implement common sense reforms that will promote increased flexibility and transparency, improve data collection, create jobs, and give predictability and certainty to the coastal communities that depend on stable fishing activities. [Click here](#) for a copy of the draft proposal.

The Natural Resources Committee has held eight hearing over the past three years related to fisheries management and the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Members of the public interested in commenting on this draft proposal can email MagnusonStevens@mail.house.gov.

“The purpose of this draft proposal is to gather public input and to see how to best improve and modernize this important law governing fisheries. This proposal would give regional fishery managers increased flexibility to deal with the complexity of fishery issues and provide economic stability and certainty to fishermen and fishery dependent communities. It also would improve data collection and increase transparency so that management decisions are based on sound science and all who are impacted by this law can have an active role in the process.

“The Magnuson-Stevens Act has enabled the U.S. to have the best managed fisheries in the world and has been instrumental in providing a framework for allowing regions to address their own unique challenges. Yet, as the Committee has heard at multiple oversight hearings, many fishermen and coastal communities that depend on healthy fisheries are currently facing challenges – including sudden severe cuts to quotas, rising costs, and restrictive fishing seasons. I believe there are updates to the law that should be considered that will address these concerns and ensure there is a proper balance between the biological needs of fish and

the economic needs of fishermen,” **said Chairman Hastings.**

The draft proposal, while maintaining the key themes of the Act, would make the following improvements:

- Provide flexibility for fishery managers when rebuilding depleted fisheries
- Provide flexibility for fishery managers when setting annual catch levels
- Provide more transparency for fishermen and others in both science and management
- Provide more predictability and stability for fishermen and fishery-dependent communities
- Allow fishery managers to take the economic impact of their decisions into account when setting harvest levels and developing rebuilding plans
- Allow fishery managers to take environmental conditions into account when establishing harvest levels and developing rebuilding plans
- Allow fishermen in regions where catch share programs have been controversial to have a say in whether a new catch share program will be implemented and to be provided better information when considering such a program
- Provide a schedule for obtaining better fishery dependent and fishery independent data especially for data poor fisheries and provide greater protection for confidential information submitted to regulatory agencies
- Authorize appropriations for an additional five fiscal years at current funding level

Visit <http://naturalresources.house.gov/magnusonstevens> to learn more.

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