

Action Alert: Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA):

A statement by:

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Summary:

A bipartisan bill recently introduced in Congress is aimed at strengthening the role of science in U.S. marine fisheries management. Specifically, H.R. 1431 - the Fisheries Science and Management Enhancement Act would amend the MSA to require regional fishery management councils to develop fishery management plans that at a minimum conform to the recommendations of qualified scientific advisors, as recommended by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. The recent American Elasmobranch Society (AES) resolution on this topic (pasted below) provides a rationale for this action.

H.R. 1431 would also establish a cooperative fisheries research program, reduce conflict of interest and broaden representation on the Councils, and provide scientific and legal training for new Council members. More information on the bill is available on the Marine Fish Conservation Network website at www.conservefish.org. You can also contact me directly with any questions.

If you live in the U.S. and would like to help promote this important initiative, please contact your Congressional Representative (as soon as possible) and ask him/her to cosponsor H.R. 1431 (please let me know if you do).

To locate your representative visit <http://www.house.gov> and punch in your zip code at the top of the page.

You can reach your Representative's office by dialing the main switchboard (202.224.3121), or you can send written comments to:

The Honorable _____
United States House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

The bill currently has 24 co-sponsors, please take immediate action.

Thank you for your help.

**Resolution Regarding Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and
Management Act Reauthorization
American Elasmobranch Society
Tampa, Florida
July 2005**

Whereas scientists nationwide, and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, have found that many of our nation's fish populations are persistently overfished and in some cases in danger of collapse;

Whereas sound science is critical to successfully managing fish populations and ensuring their long-term sustainability;

Whereas the scientific committees convened by the nation's eight Regional Fishery Management Councils are responsible for developing stock assessments and providing scientific advice on appropriate catch levels and identification of essential habitat for federal fish populations;

Whereas the Regional Fishery Management Councils, responsible for managing federal fisheries, face intense political pressure to improve short-term economic conditions of fisheries and often downplay or ignore recommendations from their scientific committees in favor of decisions that result in overfishing; and

Whereas the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy recommended amending the Magnuson-Stevens Act to strengthen the role of the Councils' scientific committees and to require the Councils to conform their management decisions to the scientific determinations and recommendations of these committees;

Therefore Be it Resolved that the American Elasmobranch Society urges the U.S. Congress to pass legislation reauthorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that serves to strengthen the role of science in fisheries management by requiring Councils to adhere to the advice of their scientific committees.