



2/1/2010

Senator
United States Senate
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator

As a constituent, I plan to stand on the steps of the U.S. Capitol on February 24 in a national rally to support the Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act of 2009, sponsored by Sen. Charles Schumer – and I ask that you join me! I'm also asking, respectfully, that you join Sen. Gillibrand in signing on as co-sponsor of this important piece of legislation.

I support long-term conservation and the sustainability of our fisheries, particularly with regard to the importance to the recreational fishing community. However, rigid, arbitrary rebuilding timeframes as contained within the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) have restricted my access to important recreational fisheries, even at times of record high abundance as in the example of summer flounder and black sea bass. In addition to a recent closure of black sea bass in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) recently told fishermen they were "required by law" to close all bottom fishing in over 1000 square miles of coastal waters from North Carolina to Florida to protect and rebuild red snapper populations, even though NMFS readily admits to having insufficient scientific data to make an accurate determination of the health of the stock.

Additionally, NMFS and fisheries managers have blamed Congress for not allocating sufficient funds to do the necessary research to provide the data needed, charging that the MSA forces them to close the fishery, regardless of the socioeconomic consequences. The real gable for these ongoing closures and restrictive access economically vital coastal fisheries can be laid upon a broken federal fisheries law.

If these fisheries were indeed in trouble, I wouldn't be writing you today. But with healthy and rebuilding stocks, I can no longer accept such inflexible federal requirements, which thus far are harming regional conservation efforts and causing a negative effect on our coastal communities and upon the businesses that serve these communities.

I support the limited flexibility in rebuilding afforded in S.1255 because it would promote both healthy fisheries and healthy fishing communities, and I respectfully request that you support S.1255 in the Senate as well. By doing so, you would be supporting the health and long-term sustainability of our coastal fishing communities. I look forward to seeing you on the steps of the U.S. Capitol on February 24th.

Sincerely,

_____ (Signature)

_____ (Print name)

_____ (Address)

_____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

I FISH ♦ I VOTE