

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 155

BY REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER

A RESOLUTION

To express the support of the Louisiana House of Representatives for the proposed changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act found in the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act (H.R. 200 of the 115th Congress) and the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017 (H.R. 2023 and S. 1520 of the 115th Congress).

WHEREAS, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, originally enacted as the Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976, is the primary law governing marine fisheries management in United States federal waters; and

WHEREAS, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, commonly referred to as the Magnuson-Stevens Act, has been amended many times over the years with two major recent sets of amendments to the law being the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996 and then ten years later the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006; and

WHEREAS, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has generally been an effective tool for managing the commercial fisheries of the United States and ending overfishing for many species; and

WHEREAS, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has also been instrumental in rebuilding fisheries that have been overfished in both the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico, such as black sea bass, red porgy, king and Spanish mackerel, red snapper, gag and red grouper, and in the protection of long-lived and slow-growing deep water corals; and

WHEREAS, the 2006 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act has created numerous challenges for the management of marine fisheries resources in the United States, particularly from the recreational fishing perspective; and

WHEREAS, commercial and recreational fishing are fundamentally different activities and require different management strategies; and

WHEREAS, as certain fish populations have been rebuilt, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has been ineffective in allowing appropriate recreational access to those fisheries, such as red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico and cobia in the South Atlantic; and

WHEREAS, the requirements by the federal government to manage fisheries under strict quotas and annual catch limits and the general inflexibility within the current version of the law have hindered more responsive management of recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, this inflexibility has fostered a serious erosion of public confidence, trust, and support for the current fishery management system under the federal agencies; and

WHEREAS, changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act are needed to provide better utilization of and access to the nation's public trust resources for the American public and the citizens of our states; and

WHEREAS, needed changes include incorporating biologically-based rebuilding time lines; providing the regional fishery management councils with the authority to use alternative fishery management measures for recreational fisheries; increasing public involvement and transparency when scientific data are developed; facilitating greater use of data, data analysis, stock assessments, and surveys from state agencies and nongovernmental sources; and requiring periodic reexamination of fishery allocations in the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Louisiana House of Representatives supports the proposed changes to the Magnuson-Stevens Act found in the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act (H.R. 200 of the 115th Congress) and the Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017 (H.R. 2023 and S. 1520 of the 115th Congress).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be provided to the Louisiana Congressional Delegation, Governor John Bel Edwards, and the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES