



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



**For Immediate Release
Office of the Director
January 12, 2007**

Statement from the Director

Subject: President Bush Signs Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006

It is my great pleasure to announce that today President Bush signed a bill into law that reauthorizes the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Act, first adopted in 1976 and last reauthorized in 1996, guides America's ocean fisheries policy and gives NOAA Fisheries Service authority to manage the nation's \$62 billion fishing industries.

When President Ford first enacted the Magnuson Act in 1976, no one knew what lie ahead in the coming 30 years. In the initial years, after we eliminated foreign fleets from our waters, the goal was to build domestic fisheries with a focus on efficiency and economic growth. It wasn't until the 1990s that we realized the need to balance this growth with conservation for long-term sustainability. The 1996 reauthorization bill gave us some legal tools to begin slowing fisheries expansion and turn around overcapitalization of our fisheries. While we've made progress in rebuilding depleted fish stocks in the decade since 1996, the law provided loopholes that hindered our ability to accelerate rebuilding.

In 2004, President Bush laid out a strategy for moving further and more quickly towards sustainable fisheries in his U.S. Ocean Action Plan. We began to work with Congress to ensure that the President's priorities were reflected in the reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens bill. I appreciate the U.S. Congress for giving us a bill that supports our priorities to end overfishing, increase our use of market-based management programs, improve our ability to monitor recreational fishing, support our enforcement efforts, and aid our fight to curtail illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing on the high seas. We now have the legal tools we need to achieve success in ending overfishing. Implementation of this important priority will be tough, but we're poised to meet the challenge.

My staff and I are working closely with the regional fishery management councils to develop implementation strategies for the various components of the new Magnuson-Stevens Act. It will take time to get these strategies in place, and implementation will be carried out through a transparent and public process. I appreciate the contributions of all our constituents to the development and passage of this bill. I look forward to a busy and productive 2007.

William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT SUSAN BUCHANAN AT (301) 713-2370

###