



Contact: Susan Buchanan  
(301) 713-2370

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### **BUSH ADMINISTRATION RELEASES MARINE FISHERIES BILL**

Today the Bush Administration released its bill to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The bill contains key elements to implement the President's 2004 Ocean Action Plan and calls for a hard deadline to end overfishing. Additionally the bill provides Congress with clear and commonsense ways to strengthen the nation's governance of ocean resources.

"The commercial and recreational fishing industries are vital to the health of our economy," said Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez. "For over 30 years, Magnuson-Stevens has been our guide for wise stewardship of the nation's fisheries resources and helped the U.S. become a world leader in marine science and conservation as a result. The Administration's reauthorization bill builds upon these successes while evolving to meet today's changing needs."

The Administration's bill:

- Ensures that fisheries management decisions are based on proven, peer-reviewed scientific information;
- Encourages fishery managers to use market-based management, such as dedicated access privileges, where appropriate to make fishing safer and more profitable;
- Calls for tougher fines and penalties for those who break fisheries laws and requires an end to overfishing practices;
- Establishes a national saltwater angler registry to ensure that recreational catches are better counted for scientific assessments and management purposes; and
- Elevates the importance of ecosystem-based management by authorizing the regional fishery management councils to develop ecosystem plans.

Building on the commitment in the U.S. Ocean Action Plan to promote greater use of market-based systems for fisheries management, Secretary Gutierrez pledged to work with the Fisheries Management Councils to double the number of dedicated access privileges programs by 2010. This goal will bring eight new fisheries under market-based management programs. In the eight fisheries where DAP has been implemented since 1990, fishermen have enjoyed higher profits, lower costs, longer fishing seasons and a safer, more stable industry.

"Oceans are important to everyone and one of our highest priorities is to create a vibrant well managed fishery system that can provide healthy food and good jobs to Americans for generations to come," said Chairman Jim Connaughton, White House Council on Environmental Quality. "These new tools will help us toward ending over fishing and rebuilding our fish stocks."

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act is the nation's premier fisheries conservation law. Originally developed in 1976, the Act provides for federal management of fisheries in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The Act establishes authority with the Department of Commerce, through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Fisheries Service and the eight regional fishery management councils, for management of U.S. fishing industries and conservation of living marine resources.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries Service: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Bill Information Page:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/msa2005>