



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Legislation to Improve Federal Marine Fisheries Management System Picks Up Support in the House

*Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus weighs in for a federal fisheries fix*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Oct. 1, 2010 – Support is growing for legislation to address the crisis in federal marine fisheries management as a House version of the Fishery Conservation Transition Act was introduced by Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus Co-Chairs Representatives Dan Boren (D-Okla.); Paul Ryan (R-Wisc.); Mike Ross (D-Ark.); and Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), along with other Members of Congress. H.R. 6316, which mirrors legislation introduced in the Senate by Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), has the backing of a broad coalition of recreational angling, boating and industry groups that see a critical need to give federal marine fisheries managers the time, resources and direction necessary to address chronic deficiencies in data collection and science that have plagued federal fisheries management.

**The Fisheries Conservation Transition Act** (FCTA) is hailed by American Sportfishing Association (ASA), The Billfish Foundation (TBF), Center for Coastal Conservation (Center), Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), International Game Fish Association (IGFA) and National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) as a decisive fix for dramatic lapses in fisheries data and science that are occurring in some federal fisheries.

"Those lapses have been highlighted in the South Atlantic red snapper fishery where management failures may ultimately result in a closure of all bottom fishing in a 5,000-square-mile area because of the lack of adequate, timely data," said ASA President and CEO Mike Nussman. "Similarly sweeping and faulty decisions are imminent with other fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. The total bottom fishing closure tied to South Atlantic red snapper is the first in what will likely be a series of fisheries train wrecks unless Congress takes action."

The Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus -- the largest bi-partisan, bi-cameral caucus in the U.S. Congress with nearly 300 members representing all 50 states -- lent its powerful voice to calls for legislation that will safeguard the strong conservation standards of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) while addressing fundamental flaws within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries).

"Flaws in marine fisheries management are causing a crisis of faith in the recreational fishing community that is jeopardizing essential conservation initiatives in our fisheries," said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Coastal Conservation. "In the absence of this legislation that gives NOAA Fisheries the guidance, time and resources to implement the Magnuson-Stevens Act the way Congress intended, we are faced with a looming fisheries management train wreck that will result in important fisheries closed unnecessarily along with severe economic impacts.

"We applaud the vision and leadership of Mr. Boren and the other co-sponsors of FCTA. The bill is a commonsense approach to marine conservation that ends overfishing; saves American jobs, and ensures management decisions are based on sound science," Angers said.

FCTA has five key areas that will steer NOAA Fisheries back towards the true intentions of the overfishing amendments made to MSA in 2006. (See "[2010 FCTA Fact Sheet](#)" for more details.)

- Clarifying MSA regarding management of multi-species fisheries by mandating specific conservation and science-based actions that would be taken, in part, to allow fishing for healthy stocks;
- Allowing reasonable time to transition to a new management framework that will allow for the rebuilding of stocks undergoing overfishing based on scientific data;
- Refining MSA economic assistance programs to insure funding is directed to those most affected by closures after carrying out a full examination of who would be affected by closures;
- Requiring NOAA Fisheries to review alternative fishery management measures to enhance the sustainability of an overfished stock and carry out more frequent stock assessments;
- Directing the agency, along with the National Academy of Science, to conduct a long-needed study on the problems surrounding the management of multi-species fishery complexes and the suitability of attempting to manage all stocks in such a fishery for maximum yield.

The Fishery Conservation Transition Act, S. 3594, is co-sponsored by Sen. David Vitter (R-La.). The House version, H.R. 6316, was introduced before Congress recessed this week. Other original co-sponsors of H.R. 6316: the bi-partisan leaders of the House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife: Chairwoman Madeleine Bordallo (D-Guam) and Ranking Member Henry Brown (R-S.C.); along with Reps. Rodney Alexander (R-La.); Rob Wittman (R-Va.), and Don Young (R-Alaska).

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