



June 2, 2014

The Honorable Kili Sablan  
U. S. House of Representatives  
423 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Sablan:

On behalf of The Natural Resources Defense Council and our 1.4 million members and activists, in addition to the countless citizens who rely on healthy oceans, we would like to thank you for your leadership in opposing H.R. 4742, the Empty Oceans Act, in House Natural Resources Committee markup last week.

If enacted into law, this bill to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act would greatly undermine fisheries management in the United States, and turn back the clock on the significant progress that has been made toward ending overfishing, recovering overfished stocks, and rebuilding our country's coastal economies. In addition, it would gut many bedrock environmental laws such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Marine Sanctuaries Act, and the Antiquities Act. The current Magnuson-Stevens law has been strikingly successful, with the number of overfished fish stocks and stocks subject to overfishing cut by more than half, U.S. seafood landings setting a 14-year record in 2011 (with a value of more than \$5 billion), and recreational fishing trips in the last decade up 30% from trips in the 1990s.<sup>1</sup> Because of this law, the U.S. is now a globally-recognized leader in science-based fisheries management.

Your leadership in speaking out and offering an amendment to protect the highly successful rebuilding requirements and prevent unnecessary loopholes in the law was critical. . The strong showing in Committee in opposition to the bill would not have been possible without this leadership, as well as without the hard and able work of your staff. We are hopeful that we can all build on this opposition as the bill and the reauthorization process as a whole moves forward, and ultimately are able to secure a reauthorized Magnuson-Stevens Act that builds on, rather than rolls back, the country's fisheries management successes to date.

Again, many thanks for your hard work and leadership within the Committee to protect our valuable ocean resources and the coastal communities that rely on them.

Sincerely,

Scott Slesinger  
Legislative Director

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<sup>1</sup> NMFS, Report to Congress - Status of Fisheries in the United States (January 2001), available at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/Archives/StatusofFisheriesReportCongress2000.pdf>; NOAA Fisheries, Status of Stocks 2012 - Annual Report to Congress on Status of U.S. Fisheries (UD), available at [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/2012/2012\\_SOS\\_RTC.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/2012/2012_SOS_RTC.pdf); NOAA, U.S. seafood landings reach 14-year high in 2011 (September 19, 2012), available at [http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/2012/20120919\\_fisheries2011report.html](http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories/2012/20120919_fisheries2011report.html); NOAA, Office of Science and Technology, Recreational Fisheries Statistics Queries, available at <http://www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/recreational-fisheries/access-data/run-a-data-query/queries/index> (accessed 1/9/14).