



S. 1916: A Recipe for Overfishing and Economic Loss

Congress should reject S. 1916 because it risks overfishing just as our nation is on the cusp of ending this pernicious problem. Many of America's ocean fish populations are in trouble today because of past policies that allowed overfishing – taking fish faster than they can reproduce. These failed policies prioritized short-term interests over the long-term health of our ocean fish, resulting in lost U.S. jobs, decreased recreational fishing opportunities, and damaged ocean ecosystems.

Congress and President George W. Bush decided to solve this problem in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), America's ocean fishing law, in 2006. **The revised law requires federal managers to limit yearly catch to end overfishing, rebuild depleted fish populations, and prevent overfishing by the end of 2011.**

Now, just as the U.S. is nearing the finish line on ending and preventing overfishing for all federally managed ocean fish populations, S. 1916 would again put our valuable fish populations at risk of overfishing by:

1. **Only protecting fish that have had official stock assessments in the past six years.** This exemption could risk overfishing on potentially dozens of species now and many more in the future. It could also undermine tools and methods that scientists and managers are already using across the country to establish catch limits for species without official stock assessments, such as establishing limits using information on the biology of the species and commercial and recreational catch data.
2. **Making protecting fish a political decision.** S. 1916 would allow the Secretary of Commerce to decide if a fish population qualifies for a new loosely-defined category called "ecosystem component stock" and eliminate the requirement for catch limits for that fish population, even if there is a risk of overfishing.
3. **Taking away the motivation to improve science.** Thanks in large part to the MSA's requirement to set catch limits on all federally-managed species, we have seen an expansion of funding and resources for fisheries science, particularly for species that are not commercially targeted or caught in low numbers. S.1916 would jeopardize this progress by taking away the legal incentive for managers to collect information on these species. Instead, managers will likely allocate their research and assessment funds to commercially-caught species where they are still legally required to set science-based annual catch limits. So rather than improve fisheries science, this bill will lead to less science for the dozens of largely recreational species that would be exempted from the ACL requirement.

All ocean fish managed by the U.S. government deserve full protection from overfishing to protect this valuable resource for future generations. S. 1916 puts too many valuable fish populations at risk. **America's ocean fish support over 1 million jobs, add billions to the U.S. economy, provide us with seafood, and protect the balance of life in the seas.** Please reject S. 1916 and help our nation make overfishing a thing of the past.

For more information, please contact:

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For additional resources, visit us at www.EndOverfishing.org.