



S. 2184 and H.R. 4208 *Investing in the Gulf of Mexico's fisheries and fishermen*

Sens. John Kerry (D-MA), Olympia J. Snowe (R-ME), and three other senators introduced S. 2184 on March 12. A companion bill (H.R. 4208) was introduced on March 19 in the House by Reps. Barney Frank (D-MA), Frank Guinta (R-NH), and eight other representatives.

This new legislation would re-direct existing revenues from duties on imported fish products (estimated at \$124 million for FY 2013) to support critical research, monitoring, and management programs, as well as provide assistance to fishermen and fishing communities.

This bill would create a regionally-based grant program that would direct 70 percent of the money (approximately **\$85 million** in FY 2013) per year to fund fisheries research and management programs. The regional fishery management councils would establish investment committees responsible for identifying funding priorities and making recommendations on which specific projects should be supported in each region. The remaining 30% of funds would be used by the Secretary of Commerce for special fisheries needs and problems, including up to 10 percent for the NOAA general operating fund.

“This bill will help by redirecting existing funding into the hands of local managers and fishermen so they can support the science necessary to make sound decisions that will increase fishing time, improve businesses, and ensure sustainable fisheries.”
—Michael Miglini, executive director, Charter Fisherman's Association

Stronger Gulf fisheries and fishing communities

The Gulf of Mexico is home to historic fishing communities and some of the nation's most iconic and valuable fisheries. The region is still recovering from (and understanding) the impacts of the 2010 oil spill, as well as decades of overfishing that have depleted some of the region's most important fish stocks. Funding through this bill could help restore the Gulf's fish and fisheries by addressing these critical needs:

Needs	Examples of Programs Eligible for Funding
Fisheries research and assessments, particularly for recreationally important species.	<i>Stock surveys, assessments and analyses</i>
More accurate and timely information on recreational catch.	<i>Improvements to recreational fishing data collection systems including MRFSS/MRIP</i>
Selective fishing gear to avoid capture of non-target wildlife (bycatch) or improve their survival rates if caught.	<i>Conservation engineering technologies and methods (e.g., environmentally friendly gear)</i>
Public education on Gulf seafood safety	<i>Seafood promotion</i>
Better incorporation of fishermen's knowledge and expertise into research and management	<i>Cooperative fisheries research</i>

This bill would restore the original intent of a law designed to invest directly in U.S. fisheries through revenues from duties on fish products. Since 1979, the majority of these funds have been diverted into the general operating account of NOAA. By directing these funds back to their original fishery management purposes, S. 2184/H.R. 4208 would bolster our nation's commercial and recreational fisheries, which support an estimated 1 million jobs. This bill makes good economic *and* environmental sense.

For more information, please contact:

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