

Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Huffman, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on the need for reauthorizing the MSA in this Congress, and in strong support of H.R. 200.

We want to thank Congressman Young for sponsoring this bill and for leading efforts to maintain productive and sustainable U.S. fisheries. We also want to thank Secretary Ross for his important focus on achieving OY from each US fishery while preventing overfishing, which this bill will help to facilitate across the country and within the GARFO region.

My comments today are on behalf of my employer, Lund's Fisheries, of Cape May, New Jersey. We are a family-owned and operated primary producer of fresh and frozen seafood and high-quality bait products for recreational and commercial fishermen in several US fisheries.

Since 2006, the U.S. seafood industry has lost access to robust fishery resources from the application of overly-precautious interpretations of the Act by attempting to rein in a changing marine environment on an annual basis or within a decadal timeframe. We appreciate the fact that this bill will improve this situation in the coming years, utilizing a collaborative approach in developing better science by which better management decisions can be made.

For the 2006 reauthorization to work there is a heavy reliance on high quality scientific information. Unfortunately, this is information that in most regions we simply do not have. The juxtaposition of insufficient data on many stocks with considerations of scientific uncertainty in the quota setting process has resulted in robust precautionary buffers and yields below MSY at the expense of our industries, our communities and our Nation.

Several facts justify the idea that additional reform is necessary to address the unintended consequences from the 2006 amendments.

- NOAA has recently published another re-examination of NSI guidance around realizing OY and supporting flexibility, predictability and stability;
- In 2013 the GAO concluded that the 10-year rebuilding requirement was arbitrary and the mixed-stock exemption should be revisited;
- Many of the recommendations from the “Managing Our Nations Fisheries III” conference and from the Councils strongly support carefully targeted reform;
- We are plagued by the Act’s requirement to have all stocks, including minor ones, at MSY in the same time and in the same space, which is severely limiting ecosystem-based fishery management options at the Council level, with the

collective result being we are not meeting our primary federal fishery management objective to maximize harvest to provide the greatest benefit to the Nation.

In the interest of time, I will quickly summarize our support for a few of the most important issues that the bill addresses:

We support flexibility in rebuilding fish stocks as part of a path to sustainable fisheries and fishing communities and support eliminating the 10-year timeframe for rebuilding overfished or depleted fisheries, replacing it with a biologically-based foundation.

We support substituting the term “overfished” with “depleted” as this term more accurately characterizes population shifts based on environmental and non-fishing impacts instead of characterizing stock status as being based solely on fishing mortality effects.

We support expanding limitations to ACL requirements for ‘special fisheries’ by expanding the existing 12 month life history definition for short-lived species, which would be of benefit to managing the butterflyfish fishery.

We support the bill's expansion of the exemption from ACL control rules for transboundary stocks which would be of benefit to managing the Atlantic mackerel fishery for the domestic industry.

We support redefining "Ecosystem Component Species" as a non-targeted incidentally harvested species, which would benefit the management of chub mackerel, a minor species associated with the Illex squid fishery and an example of an emerging fishery in the Mid-Atlantic due to warming ocean temperatures.

We support the addition of reciprocal voting rights for established council "liaison" positions between the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils.

We strongly support this bill's intent to ensure consistent fisheries management under competing federal statutes, including the Marine Sanctuaries Act, the Antiquities Act and the Endangered Species Act -- with the MSA being the controlling statute.

We appreciate the focus on regional fishery management research needs and the potential to use industry platforms in support of auxiliary stock assessment surveys. We want to emphasize the need for continued and enhanced Congressional and Agency support for

collaborative fisheries research involving the Science Centers, the commercial and recreational industries and academic partners and the need to apply more resources towards assessment science and improving the assessment process through frequent and timely benchmark assessments and updates.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing today and for your intention to seriously consider important MSA reform during this session of Congress. We look forward to working with this Subcommittee and your staff to further refine the provisions of H.R.200 and support its passage this year. I would be pleased to attempt to answer any questions that you or other members of the Subcommittee may have for me.