

Congressman Huffman, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you here today regarding upcoming reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Fisheries Conservation Act as well as important issues affecting our West Coast fisheries.

My name is Bob Dooley. I am a lifelong commercial fisherman from Half Moon Bay. I have participated in fisheries from California to Alaska for over 50 years and have represented Fishermen through my membership in various Fishing organizations at the State, Council and Federal levels. I am Currently a member of the Pacific Fishery Management Council, but I am not here today in that role.

Over the past 40 years, we have come a long way in the management of our Nation's fisheries for their long-term sustainability. We owe this **success in large part to the management principles established in the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA)**. In 2013, and then again in May of this year when I testified before the House Natural Resources Committee, I stated that the MSA is an excellent piece of legislation. I continue to stand by that statement today.

It is our foundational fisheries law and we ensure a plentiful and lasting seafood harvest through prioritizing the science-based management it prescribes. I would resist opening the door to special interest modifications that could serve to dilute the strong provisions that have served to make our fisheries the envy of the world.

For example, on the West Coast, the Trawl fishery was declared an economic disaster in 2000 due to overfishing brought on by the lack of accountability and unobserved regulatory discards. **As a result, we had 10 groundfish species declared overfished.** Many of these stocks carried a more than 45 year rebuilding schedule.

With the 2011 implementation of 100 percent **industry funded** observer coverage, **uncertainty** was eliminated. As of this year, nine of those overfished species were declared completely rebuilt and none remain overfished. This is the result of full **accountability** and science-based management.

The need for a base level of human observer coverage in our fisheries is undisputable. However as costs continue to rise, upwards of \$500/day in our region, carrying observers on all vessels becomes an extreme economic burden, especially for smaller vessels. Lack of affordable coverage is denying large segments of our Coastal fisheries access to the very grounds and stocks they were instrumental in rebuilding in the first place.

I strongly believe in full accountability, but also think there is a **scalable**, more cost-effective way to achieve that.

Electronic Monitoring and integrated logbooks are showing great promise. Many pilot programs are proving to deliver cost effective catch accounting tools. It is critically important that while regulations are being developed governing their use that we are keenly aware of the cost associated with their adoption. **We should avoid prescribing a Cadillac when all we need is a Chevy.**

At the current time proposed regulations and National policies are primarily focused on shifting the costs to industry even if that means a Five fold increase in the program costs. **Budgetary constraints are standing in the way of common sense.**

Regardless of who pays the tab, Industry or Government, we must have a common goal of reducing costs while achieving a reasonable amount of certainty in our data and management.

Most importantly I'd like to touch on **NOAA funding**. Costs to effectively manage our fisheries continue to rise but the NMFS Budget

continues to be slashed. Without adjusting NOAA's budget to keep up with the rising costs of facilities, labor, and program execution, the Agency will be hamstrung and unable to carry out their **Core** mission.

As an example, on the West Coast we were recently informed by the National Marine Fisheries Service that 2 of the 4 contracted survey vessels will not be conducting surveys for the next 2 years due to budget shortfalls. This lack of survey data and the resulting uncertainty it produces **will**, over time, cost the west coast fisheries and the communities that depend on them millions of dollars in lost jobs and fish production.

Our ability to feed good data into our stock assessments depends on having the resources to do so.

Lastly, I'd like to talk about the **impact climate change is having on our fisheries**. Commercial fishermen will be the first to tell you about the changes they've seen on the water in recent years.

These changes are creating additional fishing restrictions and closures that cause significant economic losses.

We **must** recognize that fisheries are part of the ecosystem and the necessary resources must be provided for the industry to continue its mission to remain the frontline stewards of our marine resources. **We can't turn fisheries on and off and expect them, and the communities that rely on them, to remain viable.**

I encourage Congress to support the work that the Councils and NOAA are doing to develop frameworks that will allow the industry to have the **tools** to adapt and manage their fishing practices in the face of climate change.

As I end my testimony here today I would leave you with this one thought. **Each fishing vessel is a business.** I'm here today because I want to see the long-term sustainability and growth of not just our fisheries resources, but also each business that operates on the water and the communities that depend on them.

Thank you.

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