



FISHING COMMUNITIES COALITION

*Community-Based. Conservation-Minded. Small Boat. Commercial.*

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## **Securing America's Fishing Future**

*Fishing Communities Coalition (FCC) Urges Congress to Break Down Barriers for Young Fishermen, Build on Sustainability Progress*

Washington, DC – As the 115th Congress prepares for an active 2017 legislative agenda, commercial fishermen from Alaska traveled to Washington, D.C. along with fishermen from New England and the Gulf Coast and to meet with members of Congress and staff to advocate on behalf of small boat fishing communities and sustainable fisheries.

In their meetings with more than 30 Congressional offices and committees, FCC members representing more than 1,000 commercial fishermen emphasized the importance of building on the successful *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act* (MSA), which has helped rebuild depleted fish stocks through sustainable fisheries management.

“At this pivotal moment, it is more important than ever to ensure that decision-makers in Washington have a clear understanding of why smart, sustainable fishing policies are vital to the livelihoods of fishermen and the future of the industry,” said John Pappalardo, CEO of the Cape Cod Commercial Fishermen’s Alliance. “We must build on the progress we’ve made to ensure current and future generations of commercial fishermen can sustainably harvest America’s seafood.”

FCC members advocated for the organization’s proposed [National Young Fishermen’s Development Program](#), a bipartisan initiative that would tackle a serious and growing challenge: due to high cost of entry, financial risks and limited entry-level opportunities, it is more difficult than ever for young men and women to start a career in commercial fishing.

“Young fishermen today must navigate a tough obstacle course to enter this proud and important profession, which is why we are heartened to see growing support in Congress for this initiative,” said Linda Behnken, Executive Director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association. “Empowering the next generation of fishermen with the tools they need to succeed is crucial to the survival of many coastal communities across the country.”

FCC members discussed a range of [priorities](#) related to the MSA, including maintaining science based decision-making, improving monitoring and accountability, strengthening community protections, fully funding the science needed to responsibly manage the fisheries and reducing bycatch. Thanks to the success of the MSA and other federal, state and local sustainability initiatives, the U.S. has rebuilt 40 marine fish stocks in U.S. waters since 2000. More than ever,

the commercial fishing and seafood related industries are a critical part of the U.S. economy, supporting 1.4 million American jobs and generating \$153 billion in annual sales.

“Thanks in large part to the success of *Magnuson*, red snapper have made a huge comeback in the Gulf of Mexico,” said Eric Brazer, Deputy Director for the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance. “Any reauthorization of this legislation must build upon this strong foundation, which has created successful fishing businesses and provided consumers with more access to American seafood products.”

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*The Fishing Communities Coalition is the united voice for small-boat, community-focused, commercial fishermen from around the country who strive to bring their stewardship vision to bear on national issues. We believe that together, fishermen from around the United States who believe in community-focused ideals, science-based management and forward-looking policies can build a national movement that protects fish, fishermen and fishing communities for this and future generations.*