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Seafood Harvesters of America Applauds Provisions in HEALS Act that Help Fishermen

Seafood Harvesters of America Executive Director Leigh Habegger today released the following statement after the Senate unveiled their fourth COVID-19 relief package, the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability protection, and Schools (HEALS) Act, which includes important provisions that will help the commercial fishing industry weather the COVID-19 pandemic:

“Senator Sullivan worked hard to draft and secure language in this package to allow fishermen to amend their Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan amounts to include crewmember pay to be considered eligible payroll costs. We also thank Chairman Rubio for including this language in the package and his continued work to improve the PPP. Fishermen and fishing businesses hope to be able to fully realize the benefits of this rule change and are grateful for the Senators’ continued work on this issue. We urge House and Senate members to keep this language included in the final package that is negotiated over the coming weeks.

“Additionally, we are pleased with the additional fisheries assistance monies allocated to the program established in the CARES Act thanks to the efforts of Senators Cantwell, Collins, Markey, Murkowski, and Sullivan. This money directly benefits the fishermen and fishing businesses who have experienced economic losses due to the pandemic, offering them a lifeline during declines in sales and price. It is critical to ensure that this additional funding be made available quickly to all eligible fishermen.

“We are grateful for the continued efforts of Members to prioritize the recovery of our nation’s commercial fishing businesses. As this pandemic continues and restaurants operate at a limited capacity or close down again, the ripple effects are felt at every point in the supply chain down to the fishermen on the water harvesting seafood. It’s important that Congress continue supporting these businesses so that we are able to continue providing healthy, sustainable seafood for American consumers.”