OUR MISSION

As domestic harvesters of an American public resource, we recognize and embrace our stewardship responsibility. We strive for accountability in our fisheries, encourage others to do the same, and speak out on issues of common concern that affect the U.S. commercial fishing industry, the stewardship of our public resources and the many millions of Americans who enjoy seafood.

Seafood Harvester of America is a broadly based organization that represents commercial fishermen and their associations. From George’s Bank to the Bering Sea and from California to the Florida Keys, our members reflect the diversity of America’s coastal communities, the complexity of our marine environments and the enormous potential of our commercial fisheries.

Letter To Congress: Snapper Bill Could Kill Fishing Jobs

Seafood Harvesters of America joined commercial and charter fishermen in opposition to the Red Snapper Management Authority Act by sending a letter to the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans ahead of its hearing on the Gulf States Red Snapper Management Authority Act (GSRSMA).

A joint op-ed featuring Shane Cantrell, Buddy Guindon, Glen Brooks & Brett Veerhusen followed the letter and appeared in The Hill! Representing thousands of commercial and charter fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico and throughout the United States, these three underscored the importance of retaining the federally managed red snapper fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico. They also urged members of Congress to vote against the GSRSMA, which poses a clear and imminent threat to our jobs, our fishing communities, and the red snapper resource that we have helped rebuild to the most sustainable levels in years.

To read the full letter, click here.
Harvesters Praise the House, Senate for Passing IUU

Seafood Harvesters of America issued a statement on the passage of H.R. 774, the “Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2015” in the United States Senate, which the President recently signed into law:

We are pleased to see the US Senate unanimously pass this important legislation following its passage in the US House of Representatives this summer. We thank our leaders in Washington for sending the clear message that the United States is committed to leveling the playing field for our domestic commercial fishermen competing in domestic and international fishing markets. We especially thank Representatives Madeleine Bordallo (D-GU) and Don Young (R-AK) and Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Dan Sullivan (R-AK) for their bipartisan leadership... We commend the Senate’s action on this common sense bill, and thank President Obama for signing it into law, ensuring a level playing field for domestic harvesters and promoting the increase of food security for American consumers.

Bittermann testified at the hearing, where she underscored the importance of keeping the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) in tact in order to avoid any action that would threaten the availability of red snapper to local fishermen and restaurants across the country. So far, the MSA has worked. Through its oversight of the transparent federal process, restaurants across the country continue to provide locally-caught, sustainable seafood to our customers and allow our coastal commercial fishing businesses to continue to grow.

See the full op-ed here.

Joint Op-Ed with Chef Haley Bittermann

Harvesters Executive Director Brett Veerhusen recently joined chef Haley Bittermann – the corporate executive chef and director of operations for the Ralph Brennan Restaurant Group in New Orleans, LA – in a joint op-ed on Medium.com following the House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee of the House Natural Resources Committee Congressional hearing on Red Snapper, which would give the Gulf states unprecedented management authority over the entire red snapper fishery.

“We urge members of Congress to vote against the GSRSMA and support federal management of red snapper fisheries.”

The Harvesters Endorse Senate Amendment to Coast Guard Act

The Harvesters recently endorsed the passage of a bill that would amend a section of federal fishing-industry safety laws that was originally passed in the 2010 Coast Guard Reauthorization Act (S.1611).

Support for S.1611 stems from the commercial industry’s push to reduce unnecessary costs to build new fishing vessels. Currently, Section 4503(c) of the Coast Guard Act states that commercial fishing vessels at least 50 feet in length must be built to class.

The Harvesters are actively monitoring this bill as both chambers seek to find a solution.

The Harvesters penned a letter addressed to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. The letter outlined how this provision prevents commercial fishermen from building modern, larger fishing vessels to replace aging boats. This counters solving the safety issues the Coast Guard Act set out to accomplish in the first place.
Killing the Graves Amendment

On June 1st, Rep. Garrett Graves pulled his amendment to the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA) regarding federal management of red snapper. It would have granted state control over the red snapper federal fishery and set a dangerous precedent nationally, potentially unraveling the success of the MSA, a landmark piece of legislation. Opponents of the amendment asserted that it would lead to overfishing and reduce the availability of red snapper to commercial fishermen and restaurants alike. The Seafood Harvesters of America and the National Restaurant Association successfully penned an op-ed in The Hill in opposition to the bill.

Welcome, Welcome!

In case you missed it, the Seafood Harvesters of America proudly announced the addition of the Cordova District Fishermen United in August. CFFU brings huge strength to our organization, and is the second Alaska based organization to join.

National Fisherman Op-ED

Brett Veerhusen and Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance’s deputy director Eric Brazer, and Harvesters member, recently teamed up to pen an op-ed in National Fisherman speaking on the importance of keeping red snapper management in the hands of the federal government.

Only a short time ago, red snapper populations were in crisis as a result of constant overfishing and mismanagement. After the Magnuson-Stevens Act was signed into law, rebuilding efforts began. And, with strong federal management of red snapper, populations in the Gulf of Mexico have successfully grown to the largest they have been in decades. However, that success is now being challenged. Members of Congress are seeking to grant management authority of red snapper to the five gulf states of Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas.

Proponents of federal management have asserted that granting Gulf States control over red snapper fisheries place these populations at risk of being overfished. Thereby, reducing their availability to consumers nationwide. Commercial fishermen have voiced further concerns surrounding the dangerous precedent that would be set by such an allocation of power and the potential loss of their own livelihoods. The Harvesters continuously strive to deliver sustainable fishing to all Americans, and will continue to fight for sustainable fisheries.

Farewell to a Beloved Leader

In early September, we lost our Vice President, John Schmidt to a heart attack. The loss was sudden and painful to both the SHA family and John’s, whom we extend our deepest condolences to, and wish the very best during this difficult time.
Commercial Fishing in the News

The Hill: Snapper Bill Could Kill Fishing Jobs
National Fisherman: Obama Signs IUU Fishing Act
E&E Publishing: Insults and Heated Rhetoric Fly Before Red Snapper Hearing

A Very Special Thanks to Our Member Organizations

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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For more information about the Harvesters or becoming a member, contact: brettv@seafoodharvesters.org

Our Associate Members also Include:
Ocean Marine Insurance Agency, RI
Northern Enterprise Boat Yard, AK
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Coal Point Seafoods, AK
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For more information, visit: SEAFOODHARVESTERS.ORG