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FRANK PALLONE, JR.

6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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July 22, 2010

Jim Donofrio
Executive Director
Recreational Fishing Alliance
P.O. Box 3080
New Gretna, New Jersey 08224

Dear Mr. Donofrio and members of the Recreational Fishing Alliance:

There is no debating it, our fishermen and the communities that support them are hurting. The question is, what can be done to help fishermen do what they love, to help them support their families and ensure that our communities benefit?

United States fisheries provide enormous benefits to communities nationwide, including jobs, food, recreation, and ecological benefits. In 2008, commercial and recreation fishing in New Jersey alone provided for 49,673 jobs. During this economic downturn it is important we ensure that these communities continue to flourish. That is why I have introduced in Congress pieces of legislation to protect the economic stimulus that fishing provides and the jobs it creates.

My foremost priority is the passage of the Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act. Its purpose is simple; to provide fair changes in current law where restrictions are overly onerous and are hurting the commercial and recreation fishermen. Fishermen face harsh quotas limiting the amount of fish they can catch because regulations are based on insufficient information and aimed at unattainable standards. My legislation would permit implementation of policies that will allow for fishing quotas to be increased when properly warranted.

I have sent a formal letter to the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee requesting a hearing on my Flexibility bill. In February thousands of fishermen came to Washington to rally in support of this bill and we all deserve to see this legislation move forward and see fair treatment of the fishing industry.

However, today fishermen and the fisheries they depend on face challenges beyond overly burdensome restrictions. That is why I introduced the Coastal Jobs Creation Act this year. As Congress works to create jobs and protect families, I authored this legislation to ensure coastal communities are protected. Programs that provide the information necessary to keep fishermen on the water and engaged in the process of

keeping stocks healthy are underfunded and failing. Coastal infrastructure is crumbling and marine debris is proving dangerous.

My jobs legislation funds programs that help keep fisheries open, makes fishermen and their communities an integral part of fisheries management plans, revitalizes waterfronts and promotes safe waterways. It also provides funds for the creation of state registry programs so salt water fishermen can avoid a federal fee that is scheduled to begin next year.

The ultimate goal is not to subsidize fishermen but allow them to access healthy fish stock without the burden of arbitrary and nonscientific deadlines so they can support the economies of coastal communities as they have done for decades. The Coastal Jobs Creation Act would not solve the underlying problem but would provide temporary relief until a permanent solution can be achieved through passage of my Flexibility bill.

The Coastal Jobs Creation Act will help keep fishermen working, but it's the Flexibility in American Fisheries Act which will help keep America fishing.

I wish to express my sincerest appreciation for your support and look forward to continuing to advocate on behalf of fishermen and the industries and communities they sustain. It is my hope that through this legislation our fishermen will be able to do what they love.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank Pallone Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress