

**ORAL TESTIMONY BY
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**HEARING ON
REAUTHORIZATION OF THE MAGNUSON-STEVENSON
FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT**

MARCH 13, 2013

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Samuel Rauch and I am the Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory Programs for the National Marine Fisheries Service. NMFS is dedicated to the stewardship of living marine resources through science-based conservation and management. Much of this work occurs under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, which sets forth standards for

conservation, management and sustainable use of our Nation's fisheries resources.

Marine fisheries, such as salmon in the Pacific Northwest, cod in New England, and red snapper in the Gulf are vital to the identity and economies of coastal communities in the United States.

Our most recent economic estimates for 2011 show just how economically important they are. In 2011, U.S. commercial fishermen landed 9.9 billion pounds of seafood valued at \$5.3 billion -- increases of 1.6 billion pounds (20%) and \$829 million (18%) over 2010 figures. This represents the highest landings volume since 1997 and highest value in nominal terms ever recorded. In

2011, the seafood industry generated \$129 billion in sales impacts, \$37 billion in income impacts, and supported 1.2 million jobs. Recreational fishing generated \$70 billion in sales impacts, \$20 billion in income impacts, and supported 455,000 jobs in 2011, a 40% increase in jobs over 2010. In total, U.S. commercial and recreational saltwater fisheries added 200,000 jobs to the broader economy between 2010 and 2011. This success is a product of hard work and ingenuity by the industry and a sound Federal fishery management system that is effectively rebuilding fisheries.

Since its initial passage in 1976, the Magnuson-Stevens Act has charted a groundbreaking course for sustainable

fisheries. When reauthorized in 2007, the Act gave the eight regional fishery management councils and NMFS a very clear charge and some new tools to support improved science and management. It mandated the use of science-based annual catch limits and accountability measures to prevent and end overfishing, provided for market-based fishery management through Limited Access Privilege Programs, focused on collaborative research with the fishing industry and bycatch reduction, addressed the need to improve the science used to inform fisheries management, and sought to end illegal fishing and bycatch problems around the globe.

Working together, fishermen, NMFS, the Councils, coastal states and territories, and a wide range of industry groups and constituents, have made significant progress in implementing key provisions of this legislation. As of December 31, 2012, we have put in place limits to ensure overfishing does not occur in all federally managed stocks and we have demonstrated that overfishing has ended for 58% of those stocks subject to overfishing in 2007. In addition, 32 stocks have been rebuilt. A prime example of the benefits of rebuilding is seen in the New England sea scallop fishery, where revenues increased five-fold as the fishery rebuilt, from \$44 million in 1998 to \$353 million in 2011, making New Bedford the largest port by value every year since 2000.

Ending overfishing and rebuilding depleted fisheries brings significant biological, economic and social benefit, but doing so takes time, persistence and sacrifice, and adherence to scientific information. While significant progress has been made since the last reauthorization, we recognize that this progress has not come without cost.

Fishermen, fishing communities, and the Councils have had to make difficult decisions and many areas have had to absorb the cost of conservation and investment in long-term economic and biological sustainability.

Without high quality fishery science, we cannot be confident that we are preventing overfishing and

rebuilding stocks. That is why NMFS is committed to generating the best fishery science to support the goals of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Today, we know more about our fish stocks than ever before. It is vital that our science not regress, as this would inevitably lead to declines in our stocks and a loss in the economic and social values they provide. The importance of increasing the frequency of stock assessments, improving the quality of fisheries science with a better understanding of ecosystem factors, investing in cooperative research and electronic monitoring technology, and enhancing our engagement with fishermen cannot be stressed enough. While we all share the common goal of healthy fisheries that can be sustained for generations, without clear,

science based rules, fair enforcement, and a shared commitment to sustainable management, short-term pressures can easily undermine progress toward restoring the social, economic, and environmental benefits of a healthy fishery. The cost of turning back the clock on fisheries management would be great. We estimate that rebuilding all U.S. fish stocks would generate an additional \$31 billion in sales impacts, support an additional 500,000 jobs and increase dockside revenues to fishermen by \$2.2 billion, a more than 50 percent increase over current annual dockside revenues.

The U.S. has effective tools to address marine fisheries management, and as we look to the future, we must look

for opportunities to both build on the success we are seeing now and to increase flexibility in our management system. We need to approach the challenges we are facing in our fisheries in a holistic, deliberative, and thoughtful way that includes input from the wide range of stakeholders who care deeply about these issues.

While we are making great gains – 200,000 jobs have been added to the broader economy between 2010 and 2011 by U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries, a 40% increase in recreational fishing-related jobs, an almost 20% increase in the value of the seafood landed, and \$129 billion in sales impacts are just a few of the positive results we have seen under the current law –

challenges do remain, and the National Marine Fisheries Service stands ready to work with Congress and our partners to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Act so that we may continue to improve the management and ensure the biological and economic sustainability of this vital natural resources.

Thank you again for inviting me to testify before the Committee today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.