



PRESS RELEASE

Thursday, February 25

Anglers Rally In D.C.

(MD) – Over 5,000 recreational and commercial fishermen gathered in the shadow of our nation's capitol Wednesday, Feb. 24 in an effort to stop the growing number of arbitrary fishery closures due to flawed science and poor policy.

“The effect a fishery closure has on our economies is similar to that of a natural disaster. It stops anglers from spending money and it closes businesses, two things essential for our way of life, especially for our coastal communities”, Dave Smith, Executive Director of the MSSA said.



The rally drew bi-partisan congressional support as word spread quickly through the halls of the capitol complex. Senators and representatives from nearly all the coastal states were there to show support. Maryland's congressional delegation was not present as they are still undecided in whether or not they will support this movement and recreational anglers, more specifically HR 1584 and SB 1255, *Flexibility in Rebuilding American Fisheries Act*.

“We need to let Congress and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) know that we are the collective voice of the recreational fishing community and the collective voice does not accept the current broken management system, which wreaks such havoc on all of us and our businesses,” said Jim Donofrio, Executive Director of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA).



Executive Director Dave Smith speaks with reporters in D.C. during rally

Additionally, sports anglers are worried that NOAA and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seem to be moving toward a "catch share" system for fisheries shared by recreational and commercial fishermen. Dr. Jane Lubchenco, NOAA administrator and a key player in the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, is a proponent of the allotment strategy.

A catch share system is very inflexible. Incorporating it as part of management for a mixed fishery would force a growing number of recreational anglers into a fixed quota, inevitably leading to greater restrictions such as shorter



Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association

8461 Ft. Smallwood Rd, Suite C, Pasadena, MD 21122 - 410-255-5535 - www.mssa.net

seasons and tighter bag limits.

“NOAA and our fisheries managers seem to forget that their mission is to maximize the economic value from the use of a public resource while creating sustainable fisheries, and recreational fishing has the largest economic impact in Maryland and all of the coastal states, and one that we would like to see continue to grow for our younger generations”, Smith said.

The Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association (MSSA) has met with Maryland congressman and has written numerous letters encouraging their support. MSSA represents recreational anglers in Maryland with a growing membership of over 7,000 and 14 chapters throughout the state. The MSSA is encouraging recreational anglers in Maryland to contact their congressman and tell them to support recreational anglers and this legislation.