

# fact sheet

---



## Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act

### Issue: Regional Fishery Management Councils

**Overview:** The Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils) are responsible for developing recommendations for managing the Nation’s federal fisheries. These recommendations typically form the basis of fisheries regulations implemented by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary). The Councils are comprised of stakeholders from the regions they represent, and therefore are able to accommodate state, regional, and local interests in the management process. They work collaboratively with NOAA and state officials to establish the necessary base of knowledge to formulate their recommendations. The Councils are a key part of the fisheries management process and it is vital they are comprised of knowledgeable people representing a variety of interests.

**Proposal:** The Administration’s Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) proposal addresses appointments of Council voting members, and seeks to broaden and better balance the constituent interests represented on the Councils. The bill expands the qualifications of voting Council members to include knowledge of the ecosystems that support fisheries and “a commitment to sustainable fisheries.” It also directs the Secretary to appoint Council members who represent constituencies concerned with conservation and management of the fishery resources and marine ecosystems, in addition to representatives of commercial and recreational users. In order to improve transparency, the proposal directs Governors to publish a solicitation notice when searching for Council member nominees. In the event that a Governor submits nominees that are determined to be unqualified or do not adequately provide broad and diverse representation, the Secretary is authorized to “notify the appropriate Governor of that determination.”

**Purpose:** The Administration’s MSA reauthorization proposal promotes a broader and more balanced representation of constituent interests on the Councils. It enables the Secretary to work with Governors to ensure Council nominees are not only diverse in their views, but also well-qualified. Rather than mandating a “one size fits all” ratio of commercial, recreational, and other stakeholder representation for every Council, the Administration bill preserves the Secretary’s flexibility to make appointments based on the particular needs and constituencies for each region and its Council.