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NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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Senate Commerce Committee Approves Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Bill

An important renewal of the primary legislation guiding the nation's marine fisheries resource protection and management is moving forward in the U.S. Congress. Before recessing for the winter break, the Senate Commerce Committee – chaired by Senator Ted Stevens and co-chaired by Senator Daniel Inouye – approved a Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act reauthorization bill. The bill will now go to the full Senate and then the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Commerce Committee-approved Magnuson-Stevens reauthorization bill incorporates many of the provisions included in the Administration's proposal. In particular, the bill will establish national standards for dedicated access privilege programs, reduce redundant review processes, improve data collection, increase the role of science in decision making, and improve monitoring programs to help ensure compliance with fishery laws.

"NOAA and the Administration will continue to work with and support Senators Stevens and Inouye on passage of this important piece of legislation," said Bill Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries Service. "Our goal is to ensure sustainable use of our nation's fishery resources, and this is a strong bill that will modernize U.S. ocean policy for the 21st century and strengthen our processes. We look forward to working with the Senate and House to gain passage of a final bill this year."

Key measures in the bill – S. 2012 – include among others a nationally coordinated registration program for saltwater anglers, improved social and economic information collection, an improved definition of the role of confidential data in managing fisheries, and a strengthened role of the Councils' Scientific and Statistical Committees.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

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