



# Key Priority Issues

## [The Sustainable Shark Fisheries and Trade Act of 2019](#)

**This bill requires countries that export shark/ray products into the U.S. to meet the same conservation and management standards as our U.S. fishermen.** It recognizes and rewards U.S. fishermen for their conservation sacrifices and supports economic viability for U.S. fishermen and coastal communities. It also adds skate and ray species to the existing U.S. seafood import monitoring program (SIMP) to help promote global skate/ray conservation and management. **We also oppose bills H.R. 737 and H.R. 614. These bills ban the trade and possession of the fins of legally harvested sharks/rays,** which hurts American fishermen working a sustainable and accountable fishery, removes up to 60% of the harvest value of a fishing trip away from law abiding U.S. fishermen, and have no impact on illegal, unregulated, unreported shark/ray fisheries globally because The U.S. commercial shark fishery accounts for <1% of the global fin trade.

## [Equitable Allocations](#)

Commercial fisheries are the only safe and approved way to provide wild-caught seafood to the American consumer, including those without access to catching their own fresh seafood. All commercial catch is regulated and reported under state and federal laws, and strictly enforced with substantial penalties for noncompliance; by comparison, recreational harvest is not held to the same standards.

Recreational catch estimates extrapolated from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) are inaccurate and defy common sense; The recreational effort survey calibration absurdly compounds MRIP catch estimates by 3 to 6 times. Fish stocks cannot be assessed properly using inaccurate recreational catch estimates, and allocation of this valuable resource cannot be evaluated based on unreliable catch estimates and biased economic data.

## [Saltonstall-Kennedy Act \(S-K\) Reform](#)

The S-K program was founded to provide grants to help promote U.S. seafood products. While we fully support the S-K grant program, and the basic tenet of this bill to give the industry a greater leadership role in program implementation, we do NOT support expanding the program to include recreational fishing interests; nor do we support removing the term “seafood industry” from the Act and replacing it with “fishing community”, thereby giving NGOs who do not have the best interests of the U.S. seafood industry at heart, a role in the grant approval process.

## [US Senate Bill 496 - The Young Fishermen’s Development Act of 2019](#)

This is an inclusive transparent grant program that helps commercial fishermen equally in all fisheries and their commercial fishing and seafood associations from all regions, regardless of whether such fishermen and associations are funded by environmental NGOs.

## [Fair, Balanced Representation on the South Atlantic/Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Councils](#)

All commercial catch is reported under state and federal laws and strictly enforced with substantial penalties for noncompliance; by comparison, recreational harvest is not held to the same standards. The recreational sector must be held accountable for all seafood resources being taken recreationally or consumers will be at a disadvantage. NOAA must ensure Council seats are filled in a fair and balanced way to ensure process integrity.

## [Regulatory Discard Mortality](#)

NOAA and the Fishery Management Councils must address the problem of bycatch and discard mortality, especially regarding Gulf Red Snapper. This problem affects both commercial and recreational fishermen. Discard mortality of bycatch also severely alters the validity of ACL numbers. Descending devices, while good in theory, have varying effectiveness in real-world application. Possible solutions include changing trip and catch limits from number of fish caught to pounds or length, to help eliminate high-grading, and better enforcement of recreational trip limits.

## [Red Snapper](#)

Commercial fishermen are the sole providers of red snapper to the general public. They operate under strict regulations, including IFQs based on historical data and heavy regulations, including a 3-hour lead time for law enforcement to examine any commercial fishermen bringing red snapper to dock. Recreational fishermen are under no such regulation, and their catch is only estimated. Increases in total ACL should take into consideration allowing new entries into the commercial sector, which would create new jobs and help spread the catch-shares out among fishermen. Equitable shares between the commercial and recreational sectors is the best way to ensure access to seafood for all.