



THE
PEW
ENVIRONMENT GROUP

END OVERFISHING

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Increased Funding for Data Collection Necessary to Improve Fisheries Management

One of the highest priorities of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), our nation's ocean fisheries law, is to end overfishing and rebuild depleted fish populations. The MSA requires federal fishery managers to establish science-based annual catch limits (ACLs) that do not allow overfishing and rebuild depleted fisheries for all U.S. fisheries currently subject to overfishing by 2010 and all others by 2011. The long-term economic benefits of this mandate are enormous. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) estimates that fully rebuilding U.S. fish stocks will annually generate an additional \$31 billion in sales and support an additional 500,000 jobs.

Improvements in data collection and analysis will enable fishery managers to better achieve these requirements. The following core data collection and monitoring programs should be increased by a total of \$47 million over the President's FY2011 budget request, an increase of \$35.5 million over FY2010 enacted funding levels:

- **Expand Annual Stocks Assessments: +10 million over the President's request** for a total of \$61.7 million, an increase of \$10.7 million over the FY2010 enacted level. Increased funding for data collection and monitoring will increase certainty in determining fish population sizes thus enabling managers to increase fishing opportunities.
- **Fisheries Statistics: +\$11 million over the President's request** for a total of \$32.4 million, an increase of \$11.3 million over the FY2010 enacted level. Increased funding will improve data on recreational fishing participation and catch, and also commercial catch including electronic reporting. Better real-time data could result in less restrictive management decisions.
- **Survey and Monitoring Projects: +\$6 million over the President's request** for a total of \$30 million, an increase of \$6.2 million over the FY2010 enacted level. Additional funding for fishery-independent surveys, monitoring, and research will improve estimates of ecosystem change, fishing mortality, and population size.
- **Fisheries Observers: +\$10 million over the President's request** for a total of \$48.8 million, an increase of \$7.7 million over the FY2010 enacted level. Additional funding for observer coverage, video monitoring systems and satellite tracking to improve the quality and quantity of fisheries data, population assessments, and estimates of bycatch mortality.
- **Cooperative Research: +\$10 million over the President's request** for a total of \$17.1 million, a decrease of \$500,000 below the FY2010 enacted level. Additional funding will support research with the cooperation of fishermen to help improve the quality of fish assessments, and assessment of bycatch mortality. It will create a more transparent process.

The focus of NMFS spending must be on setting catch limits based on sound science. Data collection and research programs provide the information needed to meet this mandate that is critical to ending overfishing and rebuilding valuable fish populations.

For more information, please contact:

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