



## **Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance**

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### **New Bill Would Give Young Fishermen in Gulf a Needed Boost**

*Gulf Fishermen Urge Lawmakers to Support Bipartisan Young Fishermen's Development Act*

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance is applauding a big step forward for the *Young Fishermen's Development Act*, as a bipartisan coalition in the U.S. Senate recently introduced legislation that would launch the nation's first coordinated, nationwide effort to train, educate and assist the next generation of commercial fishermen. The Shareholders' Alliance urged lawmakers to support the bill (featured in a newly released [Fishing Communities Coalition video](#)), which aims to address the steep and growing obstacles facing the next generation of America's commercial fishermen.

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*"To succeed, fishermen today need to understand a lot more than just how to catch fish – you need a firm grasp of business practices and fisheries management," said Captain Shane Cantrell of Galveston, TX. "This bill will help prepare young fishermen to make a living*

*while providing sustainable seafood for the dinner table. I urge our elected leaders in Washington to do right by fishing communities in the Gulf by supporting this bill.”*

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The Shareholders’ Alliance is a founding member of the Fishing Communities Coalition, which recently [debuted a short video](#) about the bill that features the voices of current and aspiring fishermen, including Captain Bobby Kelly of Elberta, AL.

The *Young Fishermen’s Development Act* is modeled after the USDA’s successful Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which is credited with preparing hundreds of young farmers and ranchers for rewarding careers in agriculture. Young fishermen representing the Shareholders’ Alliance and other Fishing Communities Coalition members from coast to coast recently traveled to Washington, DC, to urge legislators to support the initiative.

The Senate legislation (S.1323), introduced last week by Senators Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Ed Markey (D-MA), aligns closely with a House version introduced in April by U.S. Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and Seth Moulton (D-MA). The bill would provide grants of up to \$200,000 (totaling \$2 million annually) through NOAA’s Sea Grant Program.

### [\*\*About the Young Fishermen’s Development Act\*\*](#)

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*The Shareholders’ Alliance is the largest organization of commercial snapper and grouper fishermen in the Gulf of Mexico. We work hard to ensure that our fisheries are sustainably managed so our fishing businesses can thrive and our fishing communities can exist for future generations. We are the harvesters that provide much of the American public with a reliable source of domestically-caught wild Gulf seafood, and we do this through a philosophy that sustainable seafood and profitable fishing businesses depend on healthy fish populations.*

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