



## MSA Today: House approves Magnuson reauthorization

By [Jessica Hathaway](#) July 12, 2018

The House of Representatives passed its version of the latest Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization on Wednesday, July 11.

H.R. 200, the Strengthening Fishing Communities and Increasing Flexibility in Fisheries Management Act, sponsored by Alaska Rep. Don Young, passed primarily on party lines at 222-193. Support from the industry, however, came from all coasts as well as onshore and offshore businesses.

One of the most controversial aspects of this reauthorization has been the elimination of a 10-year rebuilding timeline for rebuilding fish stocks.

The 10-year guideline, however, is an arbitrary goal. Some fisheries recover in 2 to 3 years, and some take decades, regardless of restrictions on fishing effort. Even more to the point, regional administrators always had some flexibility in forcing managers to adhere to the rebuilding guideline or allowing for some leeway. This change is critical for fisheries managed as if there were no flexibility, like East and West coast groundfish stocks. It simply spells out the flexibility that has always been implied.

Another controversial addition to the bill is the so-called Modern Fish Act, which [threatens commercial snapper and grouper quota](#) in the Gulf of Mexico.

“H.R. 200, as a stand-alone bill, is widely supported, but when Louisiana’s [Rep. Garret] Graves added the CCA/NMMA toxic amendment it made the bill unworthy for passage,” said Bob Jones, executive director of the Southeastern Fisheries Association. “His amendment allows the

anti-fishing groups to take fish from the general public that depends on professional, commercial fishermen to provide them their share of our mutually owned marine resources.”

Jones and his colleagues in the South Atlantic eventually threw their support behind H.R. 200 with an objection to this amendment as part of the National Coalition of Fishing Communities.

The Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders’ Alliance and the Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association were two of a few commercial fishing organizations that denounced the bill.

The bill passed with various other last-minute amendments. ([Read the full version here](#))

However, the Senate has yet to present a companion bill for reauthorization. We could still be months or even years away from the final version.

<https://www.nationalfisherman.com/viewpoints/national-international/msa-today-house-approves-magnuson-reauthorization/>