

March 26, 2019

The Honorable Mike Thompson
United States House of Representatives
406 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Thompson,

As leading recreational fishing and boating organizations, thank you for your leadership in support of fisheries conservation and public land access through introduction of the ACCESS Act (H.R. 1326).

Outdoor recreation is one of America's strongest and fastest growing economic sectors, annually generating \$887 billion in consumer spending, supporting 7.6 million jobs, and creating \$65.3 billion in Federal Tax Revenue. Recreational fishing is a primary driver of these statistics as annually 49 million anglers take to the water, making fishing the Nation's second most popular outdoor activity after jogging. America's love for fishing generates \$49.8 billion in annual retail sales and creates employment for more than 800,000 people. In 2016, twice as many people fished than attended every NFL game combined, highlighting the pastimes importance to Americans, our nation's economy, and the need for legislation to expand access and improve fisheries conservation.

The ACCESS Act will generate increased recreational opportunities through improved resource conservation, including provisions to:

- Fortify the ability of the Fish and Wildlife Service to protect essential resources such as fish hatcheries, wildlife refuges, and other federal land under management of the Fish and Wildlife Service,
- Provide the United States Geological Service with adequate funding to continue necessary fisheries research throughout The Great Lakes,
- Bolster the Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships program by increasing the stakeholders included on the board, the funding allocated to the program, and including the use of socioeconomic data in Fish Habitat Assessments,
- Continue to protect the Chesapeake Bay and its fisheries through increased funding to the Federal Water Pollution Control Act and reauthorization the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act through 2024.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation that will increase angler access, fortify fisheries management and research, and ultimately create more recreational fishing opportunities to the benefit of our nation's economy and Americans alike. Please do not hesitate to reach out if there is anything our organizations can do to aid in the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership