



January 14, 2013

The Honorable Pete Sessions
Chairman
Committee on Rules
H-312 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515
Fax: (202) 225-5878

The Honorable Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules
H-312 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515
Fax: (202) 225-7822

RE: Support For Amendments #31 (Runyan), #32 (Pallone), & #71 (Bishop) to H.R 152, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013

Dear Chairman Sessions and Ranking Member Slaughter:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Marine Trades Association of New Jersey, the state's recreational boating trade association, which represents hundreds of recreational marine businesses to request that the House Rules Committee include the Pallone amendment, the Bishop amendment and the Runyan amendment in the final rule for H.R. 159, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act that is adopted by the committee. These amendments are vital to ensuring that significant fisheries disaster funding is allocated to the states that were hit hardest by Hurricane Sandy.

As you may know, boating and fishing are a significant part of New Jersey's economy. The economic impact of boating alone supports approximately 18,000 jobs and \$2 billion dollars in spending. Recreational marinas are an essential part of New Jersey's waterfront communities. They provide the infrastructure needed to fish our waterways, they provide access to a variety of recreational activities, important boating infrastructure and services that allow people seeking recreation on the water to safely begin and end their excursions. Fishing is also the primary purpose (56%) for most recreational boat outings.

Hurricane Sandy devastated our industry and severely impacted marinas, boat yards, recreational fishing and boating businesses, and destroyed countless boats. Many marinas were completely destroyed and will need to rebuild their facilities. The loss to the State's economy and these small businesses is catastrophic.

Prior to the storm, the boating and fishing industries were already facing increasing demand for water access, loss of marinas and marine infrastructure businesses and a slow economic recovery. If immediate action to support these water dependent businesses is not taken now, they will likely be forced out of business or will sell their properties to private developers. New Jersey needs more marinas to provide opportunities to access, fish and enjoy our waterways, not less.

Currently, the Frelinghuysen amendment to H.R. 159 includes only \$5 million for fisheries disaster funding, which when split up amongst the two states and allotted to each of the commercial and recreational sectors will prove woefully inadequate and will only prolong recovery, or in many cases make recovery economically impossible.

The most important change that must be made to H.R. 159 is that additional funding for fisheries disaster relief (as per the Magnuson-Stevens Act and Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act) be included to help assist our struggling fishing and boating industry in the wake of Sandy. The amendment proposed by Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr. achieves this by increasing the amount to \$50 million. While this is almost still not the full amount that the region will need to rebuild, it is certainly a fair start. Additionally, the amendments by Congressmen Jon Runyan and Tim Bishop will ensure that the fishery disaster funds in the bill go directly to those states that were adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy. We believe that this is the intention of the legislation and these clarifying amendments will ensure that is the case.

Therefore, we strenuously encourage the Rules Committee to adopt a rule that makes in order all of these amendments. At the very least, the full House of Representatives should have the opportunity to vote on these amendments. Our fishermen deserve nothing less.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. If you need additional information or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 732-292-1051.

Sincerely,



Melissa Danko
Executive Director

C: Rep. Virginia Foxx
Rep. Rob Bishop
Rep. Tom Cole
Rep. Rob Woodall
Rep. Richard Nugent
Rep. Daniel Webster
Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Rep. Michael Burgess
Rep. James McGovern
Rep. Jared Polis
House Speaker John Boehner
Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer
Rep. Timothy Bishop
Rep. Frank Pallone
Rep. Jon Runyan
Rep. Frank LoBiondo