



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 on behalf of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA)¹ 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.

The Secretary of Commerce declared federal fisheries disasters for New York and New Jersey as a consequence of Hurricane Sandy. As a leader in the recreational fishing community, RFA has been working with countless individuals and businesses to assess their damage and help find resources to rebuild. In working with state officials in New York and New Jersey, alongside individual stakeholders and industry groups in these affected states, RFA is learning of new 'uninsurable' and substantiated losses in the recreational fishing industry alone which will exceed the \$150 million mark originally set by the Senate. 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) must be included to help assist our struggling fishing 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 fishermen in the region will need to

¹ The Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) is a national, 501(c)(4) non-profit grassroots political action organization that has been representing individual sport fishermen and the sport fishing industry since 1996. The RFA Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs and ensure the long-term sustainability of U.S. saltwater fisheries. RFA members include individual anglers, boat builders, fishing tackle manufacturers, party and charter boat businesses, bait and tackle retailers, marinas, and many other businesses in fishing communities.

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 consideration of our letter.

Sincerely,



Jim Donofrio
Executive Director

cc: 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