



Openers

Let's Get Modern!

The very word "modernization" has a historically happy and positive ring to it, right? It exudes the notion of change and progress.

So with that positive thought in mind we heartily endorse and support a new bill



Fish netted by the ton: What "modern" fisheries looked like in 1986. Management has improved, but partiality toward commercial interests lingers.

introduced in both chambers of the U.S. Congress that may help recreational fisheries management in a number of ways.

Titled the "Modernizing Recreational Fisheries Management Act of 2017" (to be better known as the Modern Fish Act), the proposed law gives long sought emphasis to non-commercial family level angling.

What a breath of fresh air this bill offers after a half century of dominance by for-profit special inter-

est takers by the ton at the expense of the general public, and the well-being of the resource itself.

Ever since the Magnuson Act was enacted in the 1970s under commercial influence, it's been no secret that the for-sale powers usually have run the show while many of us just watch and weep.

Now, believe it, the president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is backing the Modern Fish Act, along with a most impressive list of nationwide organizations and leaders.

The Foundation's Jeff Crane noted that "The Modern Fish Act offers reasonable solutions to a management system designed primarily for commercial fisheries but which has failed to address the needs of millions of saltwater anglers. The simple adjustments in this bi-partisan bill would continue to ensure conservation of our nation's saltwater fisheries, while finally establishing greatly needed parity for the recreational fishing community."

Of course the bill lacks a certain specificity on particular issues such as the unending red snapper mess and controversial sale of recreationally caught fish, or the out-moded method of allocating excessive quotas to market takings even when research shows that it is more valuable all around for everyone to share equally.

But the individual issues can be addressed separately once the overall structure is in place. First let's get the fundamentals of fairness and modernity embedded in the system.

You can be sure that victory will require a long battle against self-serving interests that always prioritize personal profits over the public good.

You can read the text of the Modern Fish Act and supporting information at www.sportfishingpolicy.com.

Let's all dig in.

Karl Wickstrom