

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ted Lieu
United States House of
Representatives
403 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
United States House of
Representatives
514 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Feinstein, Capito and Harris, and Representatives Lieu and Fitzpatrick:

As leading recreational fishing and boating organizations, we thank you for introducing the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act (S. 906, H.R. 1979), to phase out the use of large-mesh drift gillnets and bring California commercial swordfish fishing in-line with all other U.S. and international swordfish fisheries.

For many years, our community has supported efforts to transition away from drift gillnets to safer, more selective fishing methods for swordfish, tuna and other commercial species. Large-mesh drift gillnets are an anachronistic commercial fishing method that produce excessive bycatch and waste, including of popular sportfish, marine mammals and sea turtles. Over half of the catch in the California drift gillnet fishery is discarded as unwanted, prohibited, or protected species. It's time large-mesh drift gillnets are eliminated from California as they have been throughout the rest of the country.

In other U.S. and international fisheries, these gillnets have already been replaced by methods like deep-set buoy gear that are efficient for the targeted species and produce virtually no bycatch. By helping to transition the California drift gillnet fishery toward these more sustainable fishing methods, your legislation would represent a tremendous marine conservation victory that we have been working toward for many years.

Thank you for your leadership on this important legislation that will benefit the health and abundance of the marine resources we depend on.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Balboa Angling Club
Boat US
California Sportfishing League
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association California
Coastside Fishing Club
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Dana Angling Club
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
International Game Fish Association

Laguna Niguel Billfish Club
Los Pescadores Fishing Club
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Recreational Fishing Alliance
Snook & Gamefish Foundation
The Billfish Foundation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Tuna Club of Avalon
Wild Oceans