

October 12, 2021

The Honorable Mario Rubio
U.S. Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Elvira Salazar
U.S. House of Representatives
1616 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
U.S. Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ed Case
U.S. House of Representatives
2210 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Rubio and Wicker, and Representatives Salazar and Case

On behalf of the recreational fishing and boating community, thank you for your leadership on the Reusing Equipment for Environmental Fortification (REEF) Act. This bill will help provide opportunities for retired naval vessels to be considered for artificial reefs, which would boost the marine environment and provide recreational fishing opportunities.

The nation's 55 million recreational anglers contribute \$125 billion to the economy annually and support 825,000 jobs. Through federal excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel, license fees, and donations, anglers spend an additional \$1.6 billion annually on conservation efforts. Conservation and access to vibrant fisheries are extremely important to anglers.

Artificial reefs enhance the marine ecosystem and establish new fishing structure. This occurs because artificial reefs provide a place for algae and invertebrates, such as coral, to accumulate, which are a food source for other fish and marine life. These smaller creatures attract larger predators, many of which are important sportfish. Ultimately drawn by the food, marine life begins using the artificial reef for shelter. There are numerous examples of decommissioned vessels being successfully converted into artificial reefs, benefiting the marine environment and becoming valuable fishing destinations.

By requiring Congress to report viable naval vessels for artificial reefing, the REEF Act will help create new marine ecosystems and recreational fishing opportunities. Not only is this exciting legislation for marine life and anglers, but also for local economies that can benefit from the spending power of anglers.

We are grateful for your commitment to improving marine habitats and increasing recreational fishing opportunities through the REEF Act. We are ready to assist you as you work toward the passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
BoatU.S.
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation
International Game Fish Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association

National Association of Charterboat
Operators
Panama City Boatmen Association
Recreational Fishing Alliance
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Wild Oceans