November 15, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) established a unique regional/federal partnership for governing our nation's fisheries. The Regional Fishery Management Councils (Councils) are the cornerstone of the MSA, bringing together fishermen, communities, the public, and the National Marine Fisheries Service to address fishery management issues through a transparent, participatory process. For over forty years, this landmark piece of legislation has served the nation well. As a result, the U.S. system of science-based fisheries management provides a model for fisheries around the world. Our commercial and recreational fisheries contribute billions of dollars in economic gains to the nation and have positive social and cultural impacts on our communities. Clearly, the MSA has been a success.

Because of our role, the Councils have a unique perspective on the MSA and the current reauthorization process. Over the past year, the Council Coordination Committee has worked to identify the strengths of the existing statute and areas where there is room for improvement. We are pleased to forward you the results of that effort. The attached white paper includes the Council Coordination Committee's consensus statements on the major issues that are being discussed. It also includes regional perspectives on most of the issues, highlighting that one of the MSA's strengths is its regional approach to solving fisheries management challenges.

We hope this document will prove useful to the administration during the MSA's reauthorization. We look forward to working with the Department of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service on this important task. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

Carlos Farchette, Chair
Caribbean Fishery Management Council

Leann Bosarge, Chair
Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council

Mike Luisi, Chair
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Phillip Anderson, Chair
Pacific Fishery Management Council

John Quinn, Chair
New England Fishery Management Council

Charles Phillips, Chair
South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Dan Hull, Chair
North Pacific Fishery Management Council

Edwin Ebisui, Jr., Chair
Western Pacific Fishery Management Council

Enclosure
cc: Mr. Chris Oliver, NMFS