

# Recreational Fishing Alliance

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## **CATCH SHARE ACTIVISTS MEET HEAVY RESISTANCE** **RFA Says DC Legislators Pushed Back Hard Against Preservationist Attack**

*February 16, 2011* - Earlier today, the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) issued a press release blasting Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) activists for erroneously claiming to represent U.S. fishing interests today on Capitol Hill. RFA has since learned that members of the EDF delegation have been shameless in their anti-fishing rhetoric with legislators, putting out false information to members of Congress in hoping to sell their Catch Share manifesto.

"We heard from our sources that one particular turncoat captain now working for EDF actually claimed that all 5,000 fishermen who rallied in DC last February were actually paid by rally organizers to attend the massive demonstration," said RFA Executive Director Jim Donofrio. "The fishermen that showed in Washington to defend their right to fish are not the sellouts that the preservationist community had hoped to find. These were hardworking fishermen and dedicated saltwater anglers who rallied in DC last year, so we're happy to see that EDF's treachery fail miserably today in our nation's capital."

Just a few hours ago, Congressman Walter Jones (R-NC) filed an anti-catch shares amendment to H.R. 1 - the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution which will fund the federal government through the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011. Amendment #548 was printed in the Congressional Record today and would prohibit NOAA Fisheries from spending any money on the development and approval of new catch share programs in fisheries under the jurisdiction of the Gulf of Mexico, South Atlantic, Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils. It does not affect anything on the West Coast or Alaska. This amendment could come up for floor consideration, and potentially a vote as early as this evening.

"Fishing industry representatives who support Rep. Jones' amendment need to contact their Members of Congress in the House of Representatives and urge them to support the Jones Amendment #548 to block funding for catch shares," Donofrio. "We're also very thankful to all those legislators who weighed in today from along the coast in opposition to this sharecropping scheme being perpetrated by EDF."

U.S. Senator Kay R. Hagan (D-NC) today led a bipartisan, bicameral group of lawmakers in urging the Department of Commerce to consider alternatives to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Catch Share Program. In a letter to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke, the Members of Congress said the policy endangers the fishing industry and asked him to consider alternative fishery management techniques.

Hagan sent the letter along with Sens. Charles Schumer (D-NY), Richard Burr (R-NC), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Scott Brown (R-MA), and Reps. Jones, Barney Frank (D-MA), Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), and Mike McIntyre (D-NC).

"The fishing industry is a crucial part of our nation's economy, but in these tough economic times, too many fishermen are struggling to provide for themselves, their families, and their communities," the lawmakers wrote. "We write to express our concern that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) catch share policy will further endanger the economic vitality of the already-struggling fishing industry and will not end overfishing, and to urge NOAA to consider other well-established fishery management techniques."

NOAA has requested \$54 million to encourage the adoption of catch share programs but has not committed the necessary funds to assessing fishery stocks, as it is required to do under the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The members said in their letter that NOAA must do this assessment before even considering a new fishery management tool that does not have broad-based support from the fishing industry.

"Honest fishermen work very hard to make a living in our states every day," the Members of Congress wrote. "For them and for our economy, we must institute fishery management tools that enhance the industry's vitality, not diminish it."

[The signed letter in PDF format can be viewed here.](#)

To find your Member of Congress in support of Amendment #548, visit <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml>

#### About Recreational Fishing Alliance

The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. *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 our Nation's saltwater fisheries.* For more information, call 888-JOIN-RFA or visit [www.joinrfa.org](http://www.joinrfa.org).