

The Honorable Richard Pombo
The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
The Honorable Wayne Gilchrest
The Honorable Jim Saxton
The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 2, 2006

Dear Chairman Pombo and Representatives Abercrombie, Gilchrest, Saxton, and Young:

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative, a bipartisan effort of the members of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, is writing to express our support for provisions that strengthen the ability of the United States and international fishery management organizations to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUU), which is a significant and growing threat to sustainable fisheries worldwide.

The Joint Initiative supports provisions found H.R. 5946, the Stevens-Inouye International Fisheries Monitoring and Compliance Legacy Act of 2006. Like provisions contained in S. 2012, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2005, H.R. 5946 would regulate and prevent IUU fishing by calling for the Secretary of Commerce to: establish an international compliance and monitoring program; report to Congress on efforts to reduce IUU fishing; strengthen the ability of regional fishery management councils to combat IUU fishing; and promote international cooperation on fisheries management.

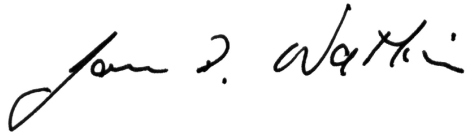
High seas fisheries generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and support thousands of jobs in the United States and its territories. In addition, the high seas possess a rich marine biodiversity that is threatened when bycatch of vulnerable species by high seas fleets is inadequately monitored and controlled. Finally, the lack of effective international controls puts U.S. fishermen, who must comply with rigorous management requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and other laws, at a significant competitive disadvantage compared to unregulated foreign fleets.

It is our belief that provisions such as those contained in H.R.5946 will help ensure protection, restoration, and sustainable management of fisheries and other living marine resources on the high seas. Further, and equally important, these provisions will help ensure the viability of United States fisheries by establishing greater international parity in high seas fisheries conservation and management. The goals of such provisions are supported by myriad U.S. and

international organizations that recognize the pressing need to improve high seas fisheries management.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative applauds your support for provisions in federal law that would address the problems of IUU fishing, and we are available to work with you and your staff to ensure that these provisions become a reality.

Sincerely,



James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman, U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy



The Honorable Leon E. Panetta
Chair, Pew Oceans Commission

Cc: The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Nick Rahall
The Honorable Ted Stevens
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Mr. James L. Connaughton