

May 13, 2025

The Honorable Russell Fry
United States House of Representatives
345 Cannon HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Levin
United States House of Representatives
2352 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans Act (MAPOceans Act)

Dear Representatives Fry and Levin,

The undersigned recreational fishing and boating organizations express our strong support for the introduction of the Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans Act (MAPOceans Act). On behalf of the nation's anglers, boaters and recreational fishing and boating industries, we commend your leadership in advancing this critical legislation, which will support public access to marine waters by standardizing digital spatial information concerning recreational opportunities on marine waters.

The MAPOceans Act directs the consolidation and digitization of boating and recreational fishing information for federally managed marine waters and federal fisheries administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This bill will enhance and expand recreation opportunities by making more readily available modern technology commonly found in smartphone applications and navigational tools. This will provide anglers, boaters, and other users with the information they need to safely and legally enjoy offshore waters and federal saltwater fisheries.

The millions of square miles of ocean and numerous saltwater fish species regulated by NOAA present enormous recreational opportunities. However, information about access restrictions are often difficult to access and constantly changing. The MAPOceans Act directs NOAA to compile these regulations in digital form so they can be integrated into GPS units and smartphone applications that are popular with boaters and anglers, making that information available to the public in a timely manner. Improving the accessibility of information of recreational information on marine waters – including fishing closures, the geographic boundaries of fishing area restrictions, watercraft type and motor restrictions, and restrictions on methods of catch, such as requirements to use circle hooks or descending devices – will help anglers and boaters confidently recreate on marine waters.

This legislation builds on the recently passed MAPLand Act, which was signed into law in 2022 to support mapping data accessibility for recreational access and opportunities on federal lands. Similarly, the MAPWaters Act, which passed the House in January as H.R. 187, requires Department of Interior agencies and the U.S. Forest Service to provide standardized and digitized information on waterway access status, propulsion restrictions, permissible watercraft types, and specific fishing regulations.

The standardization and digitization of data required by the MAPOceans Act will improve efficiency, reduce duplication and ensure that the public may expediently access up-to-date

information through mapping and GPS tools. For these reasons, we strongly support the MAPOceans Act and thank you for your commitment for improving public access to our nation's marine resources.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Boat Owners Association of the United States (BoatUS)
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
International Game Fish Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership