



# PRESS RELEASE

## Recreational Fishing Alliance

5724 N. Route 9, New Gretna, NJ 08224  
P: 888-564-6732 F: 609-294-3812

For Immediate Release  
Contact: Jim Hutchinson, Jr.

April 21, 2010  
888 564-6732

### **CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE TO HEAR TESTIMONY ON CATCH SHARES RFA TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AMERICA'S RECREATIONAL FISHERMEN**

On Thursday, April 22 at 10 a.m., the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) will once again make its opposition to catch shares in the recreational sector perfectly clear. When it comes to privatizing the nation's fisheries under the guise of a new fisheries management tool, no means no!

"This is a fact that cannot be compromised," said Jim Donofrio in advance of his expected testimony before Congress on Thursday. "We do not want any discussion on any program that compromises traditional open access of seasons, size limits and bag limits."

The Congressional Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife will convene a special hearing on Earth Day to review the implementation of catch shares and individual fishing quotas. Led by Del. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU), *A Community Perspective on Catch Shares* will feature testimony from key members of the fishing and conservation community. Donofrio said that since being invited on April 5<sup>th</sup> to testify, he's had plenty of opportunity to talk with other members of the coastal fishing community. "Our individual members and our closest allies in the recreational sector have all said the same thing, no way, no how," Donofrio said. "We don't have the luxury of being able to compromise away the rights of coastal stakeholders, our mission statement doesn't accept it and our core beliefs won't allow it."

The RFA has already submitted written testimony to the Committee staff on behalf of the Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA), Fishing Rights Alliance, United Boatmen and United Boatmen of New York, Maryland Saltwater Sportsmen's Association (MSSA), National Association of Charterboat Operators (NACO), Conservation Cooperative of Gulf Fishermen (CCGF), Southern Kingfish Association (SKA), New York Sportfishing Federation, and New York Fishing Tackle Trade Association, as well as the RFA. Donofrio said the unified message he plans to bring to DC on Thursday will hopefully be heard by the legislators, particularly those not present for the fishermen's rally in DC on February 24<sup>th</sup>.

"Nearly 5,000 fishermen were on hand in our nation's Capitol in February, and the message to our U.S. Senators and Representatives was very clear on the topic of catch shares," Donofrio said. "This scheme is meant purely to restrict access, choke our fishing industry, and drive ownership of our public resources into the hands of private corporations and wealthy individuals."

In an article this week in the Gloucester Daily Times, investigative reporter Richard Gaines ([www.gloucestertimes.com/fishing](http://www.gloucestertimes.com/fishing)) reported that MRAG Americas, an environmental services firm headed by Andrew Rosenberg had "prematurely" announced winning a \$6.5 million contract to provide monitors on groundfishing boats required to fish under new catch shares policy directive by NOAA Fisheries. According to the Times, Rosenberg helped Dr. Jane Lubchenco write the nation's catch share policy when she was vice-chair of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) board, before she was appointed head of NOAA.

(over)

Although the contract award in New England's first year under the catch share program remains to be made official, MRAG Americas posted this week that it had been chosen by Dr. Lubchenco's office to be "contracted to provide sector and dockside monitors for sectors within the New England multispecies groundfish fishery."

Gaines writes that catch shares long have been an EDF's policy goal, despite opposition from many fishermen who argue the approach is largely a means of shifting and consolidating equity in fisheries. "The infusion of investment capital tends to replace the large number of small, owner-on-board businesses with a small number of highly capitalized corporations," Gaines wrote.

The Gloucester Times reported that as former regional director with NOAA fisheries in Gloucester, Rosenberg helped build a formidable academic center for ocean studies at the University of New Hampshire and co-wrote scientific papers with Lubchenco while she was at Oregon State University. Rosenberg and Lubchenco were among a working group of scientists organized by EDF to create the national catch share program for the Obama administration. The Times also reported that MRAG recently had a contract with EDF to write its catch share handbook.

"The preservationists at EDF have long charged fishermen with being the proverbial foxes in charge of the henhouse when it comes to managing our coastal fisheries, yet it's starting to becoming perfectly clear that the venture capitalists at EDF have bought the whole farm," Donofrio said.

"Big time investors with very deep pockets have helped put many of these new policy initiatives at the forefront of the environmental movement, they've put their people into the Obama administration where decisions are made, and they've even taken seats on our fisheries management councils where the ideas are proposed," Donofrio added.

"Appropriately enough, on Earth Day 2010, our recreational fishermen will have the chance to be heard in Congress when we deliver the message that our public resources are not for sale," he added.

The live webcast of the Congressional hearing will take place on April 22 starting at 10 a.m. (EST) at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov>.

#####

*The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. RFA's 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).*