



PRESS RELEASE

Recreational Fishing Alliance

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RFA-LA APPLAUDS SENATOR FOR PULLING BOWFISHING BILL

A Louisiana bill aimed at banning bowfishing for redfish was pulled by Sen. Dan Claitor on Wednesday due to unfavorable public input. Claitor had sponsored Senate Bill 573 at the behest of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of Louisiana and former Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Secretary Jimmy Jenkins. It was due to be heard Thursday by the Senate Natural Resources Committee. Louisiana Sportsman magazine quoted Sen. Claitor as saying "there was nothing to be gained by continuing with the bill...the science isn't there (to justify a ban)."

Louisiana members of the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA), a national, grassroots political action organization representing the rights of recreational saltwater fishermen and the recreational fishing industry, had been extremely vocal in opposition to the bill. Gregory Jack, a recreational angler from Louisiana planned to testify before the Committee Thursday in opposition to the legislation, and was happy to hear that Sen. Claitor pulled the bill. "This represents a huge win for the sportsmen of Louisiana. We are grateful that Sen. Claitor listened to our concerns and recognized the importance of the traditional recreational fishery in Louisiana when deciding to pull this bill," Jack said.

In his letter to the Senate Natural Resources Committee, Jack noted particular concerns with the bill which would have prohibited a traditional method of fishing used by Louisiana bowhunting and spearfishing anglers for centuries. "RFA can find no evidence that the above mentioned fishing gear presents any conservation problem to the long-term sustainability of red drum or any other saltwater fishery in Louisiana," Jack said.

Noting that the redfish harvest attributed to bows and spears is very small, Jack said a bowfishing ban would have actually impacted only a small percentage of the total number of anglers in Louisiana. "However, it would set a dangerous precedence of managing Louisiana's marine resources through ideology instead of science. Furthermore, now is certainly not the time to be passing arbitrary laws that may unnecessarily cause the loss of even one job in the state. RFA does not support fisheries management driven by emotion and therefore does not support S.B 573."

Because the combined harvest of red drum attributed to bows and standard spear gear represents such a small percentage of the total recreational harvest, the RFA said the proposed action was arbitrary, capacious and not based on any factual evidence that this gear poses a management or conservation problem for the red drum fishery in Louisiana. "I'm happy that Sen. Claitor, a sportsman himself, understood the importance of encouragement over discouragement particularly in a time when so many of our sporting rights are under attack."

RFA believes the bill would have set a dangerous precedent by opening the door to recreational fishing bans based on ideological agenda. "It is very possible that gear such as treble hooks and even the use of bait or flounder gigging could be prohibited in the future," Jack included in his letter, adding "all it would require is a special interest group to convince a sponsor to introduce a bill outlawing this gear."

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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.