



PRESS RELEASE

Recreational Fishing Alliance

176 B South New York Road, Galloway, NJ 08205
P: 1-888-564-6732 F: 609-404-1968

For Immediate Release
Contact: Jim Hutchinson, Jr.

June 19, 2009
888 564-6732

RFA TO PRESIDENT OBAMA – JUST SAY “NO” TO CATCH SHARES NEW QUOTA SCHEME “FLIES IN THE FACE OF THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE”

Washington DC – In an official letter dated June 12, 2009, the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA) Board of Directors and Executive Director have asked President Obama to maintain traditional recreational fishing access consistent with the public trust doctrine, while also allowing fishing and the rebuilding of coastal fisheries to occur simultaneously. “Although we have seen no formal position from your administration regarding recreational catch shares, we are concerned that the environmental groups are seeking to kill our open access tradition with little thought to impact such actions will have on coastal communities and individual freedoms,” the letter said.

In reaching out to the Obama administration, the RFA is hoping to build continued support throughout the Capitol for the future protection of traditional recreational fishing access. The plea on behalf of the recreational fishing community is in response to recent proposal entered on the record at the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council by a Texas-based conservation group, suggesting that recreational fishing should be considered under “a *catch shares program*” whereby individual recreational fishing quotas are allotted through a bidding process. While directly referencing the proposal by the Houston-based Coastal Conservation Association (CCA), the RFA also points to lobbying groups like Environmental Defense Fund as pressing the Obama Administration for “legislation to require that catch shares be considered in all fishery management plans by 2012.

“Mr. President, there is no place for ‘catch shares’ or ‘individual fishing quotas’ (IFQ) within the recreational fishing sector,” said James Donofrio in signing on behalf of the RFA. “An IFQ or catch share fishery for recreational fishing would collapse our coastal businesses, from the marinas, tackle shops, boat dealers, and for-hire industry, on along to the restaurants, hotels, gas stations and grocery stores which rely on a vibrant tourism boost from recreational fishing activity. Such impacts will not be exclusive to the seaside regions, as the trickle-up effect to wholesalers and manufacturers would also be immediately felt in the heartland.”

While Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPP) are being issued throughout the commercial fishing sector, the RFA points out that proposals to privatize the recreational fishing community would have serious negative impacts on the recreational sector in terms of active participation and overall economics. “The power of the recreational fishing industry supports over 500,000 jobs, and generates over \$38 billion in value-added impacts each year,” RFA’s letter stated, adding “This new scheme for the privatization of our nation’s marine resources would be devastating to our overall economy, and flies in the face of the public trust doctrine which protects the interest and rights of the public to free access of marine and riparian places for fishing and navigation.” ***RFA encourages members to download the letter and forward your own copy to the President by visiting www.joinrfa.org/Press/PresidentObama_061209.pdf.***

#####

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.