



WESTERN
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FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

Press Release

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Western Pacific Fishery Council Praises Magnuson-Stevens Act Re-authorization

HONOLULU (9 December 2006) The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council today praised the U.S. Senate for its vote Thursday and the U.S. House of Representatives for its vote yesterday re-authorizing the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. The Council is pleased that the re-authorized Act, as amended, improves monitoring and compliance for high seas fisheries and fisheries governed by international fishery management agreements.

“The re-authorization comes on the eve of the 3rd regular session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC), to be held next week in Apia, Samoa, and will allow the United States to participate in this regional fishery management organization as a member,” notes the Council’s executive director, Ms. Kitty M. Simonds. The jurisdiction of the Council includes federal waters surrounding the State of Hawaii, Territories of American Samoa and Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and several small remote islands and atolls (Wake, Johnston, Howland, Baker, Palmyra, Kingman Reef, Jarvis and Midway). At its last meeting, the WCPFC agreed upon country quotas for tuna, which have had an impact on U.S. Pacific island fisheries. Under the re-authorized Act, the Commissioners to represent the United States will include the chair or a member of the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Pacific Fishery Management Council. Furthermore, the Act ensures participation in the Commission and its subsidiary bodies by American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands to the same extent provided to the territories of other nations.

The Council is also pleased that the amended Act emphasizes an ecosystem approach to fisheries management; promotes the use of local and traditional knowledge by Native Hawaiians, Pacific islanders and Alaskans to enhance science-based management of fishery resources in these regions; and provides for marine education and training programs and projects to promote marine-related professions among indigenous Pacific islands, Native Hawaiians and other under-represented groups. The Council is in the process of amending its species-based fishery management plans into place-based fishery ecosystem plans (FEPs). Wide community involvement and recognition of traditional fisheries knowledge are significant components of the FEPs.

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