

Congressional Corner



To keep up to date on the latest legislation affecting fishing in your region and the nation, visit www.congress.gov.

Jan. 3, 2023, was the first day of the 118th United States Congress with changes to the House of Representatives and the Senate. New members, including James Moylan, (R-H.R., Guam) and Jill Tokuda (D-H.R., Hawai'i), were sworn in as the balance of power changed in the House from Democrat to Republican but remained with the Democrats in the Senate. All bills from the 117th Congress that did not pass and get signed by the President are now dead. The last Congress passed 362 public laws and 3 private laws, including the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 117-121), which provides for regional representation in the review of certain fisheries grants. Bills that included changes to fisheries and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act did not pass.

Currently, members of the House and Senate are being assigned to committees and bills are just starting to be introduced. While no fisheries-related bills have been introduced as of the drafting of this article, it is certain that Congress will likely see fishery bills similar to what was introduced in the last session.

Local legislatures are also gearing up for another session with fisheries bills being introduced in the state and territories. One bill in the Fono (American Samoa's legislature) House of Representatives would give the American Samoa Department of Port Administration authority to establish a local licensing system for U.S.-flagged purse seiner vessels. With American Samoa dependent on the tuna industry, this bill would be the first step towards being recognized, and afforded with, full benefits and privileges as a Small Island Developing State/Participating Territory under the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission. These benefits include allowing U.S. purse seine vessels to fish during closed months to continue to sustain American Samoa's tuna industry. In Hawai'i, the start of the biennial brings new bills introduced to the legislature, including bills to prohibit the harassment of fishers, to authorize permits for traditional Native Hawaiian fishing practices and to limit entry to commercial fisheries. The legislatures in Guam and the CNMI are also starting their sessions and may consider fisheries bills in the future. 🐟

To follow along with the legislation in the other island areas, visit:

American Samoa - www.americansamoa.gov/fono

CNMI - <https://cnmileg.net>

Guam - <https://guamlegislature.com/index/bills>

Hawai'i - www.capitol.hawaii.gov



Council Family Updates



Top row from left: John Gourley (chair); William Sword (vice chair, American Samoa); Sylvan Igisomar (vice chair, CNMI). Bottom row from left: Manny Dueñas (vice chair, Guam); Roger Dang (vice chair, Hawai'i).

At its 193rd Council Meeting, the Council appointed the following members as its 2023 officers:

- * **John Gourley**, chair
- * **William Sword**, vice chair, American Samoa
- * **Sylvan Igisomar**, vice chair, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- * **Manny Dueñas**, vice chair, Guam
- * **Roger Dang**, vice chair, Hawai'i

At the 193rd Council Meeting, the Council supported the following advisory body changes:

- * Appointed **Kisei Tanaka** to the Archipelagic Plan Team.
- * Appointed **Tia Brown** as an ex-officio member of the Scientific and Statistical Committee.

The Council is a winner! Since 2016, the Gourmand Awards publish annually the *Food & Drink* best free publications available for downloads on the internet. The list published January 2023 includes 375 entries, from 125 countries and regions: <https://tinyurl.com/GourmandAwards2023> 🐟

