

October 28, 2022

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Rogers
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers,

On behalf of the recreational fishing and boating community, we are writing to respectfully request your support for including the Reusing Equipment for Environmental Fortification (REEF) Act (S. 2946 / H.R. 5306) in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023. The REEF Act will help provide opportunities for retired naval vessels to be considered for artificial reefs, which would boost the marine environment and provide recreational fishing opportunities.

The nation's 55 million recreational anglers contribute \$128 billion to the economy annually and support 825,000 jobs. Through federal excise tax on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel, license fees, and donations, anglers spend an additional \$1.7 billion annually on conservation efforts. Conservation and access to vibrant fisheries are extremely important to anglers.

Artificial reefs enhance the marine ecosystem and establish new fishing structure. This occurs because artificial reefs provide a place for algae and invertebrates, such as coral, to accumulate, which are a food source for other fish and marine life. These smaller creatures attract larger predators, many of which are important sportfish. There are numerous examples of decommissioned vessels being successfully converted into artificial reefs, benefiting the marine environment and becoming valuable fishing destinations.

By requiring reporting to Congress on viable naval vessels for artificial reefing, the REEF Act will help create new marine ecosystems and recreational fishing opportunities. Not only is this exciting legislation for marine life and anglers, but also for local economies that can benefit from the spending power of anglers.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
BoatU.S.
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation

International Game Fish Association
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Association of Charterboat Operators
Panama City Boatmen Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wild Oceans