

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries,

On behalf of the nation's leading recreational fishing and boating organizations, we write in strong support of H.R. 6422, the American Water Stewardship Act, and respectfully urge the House of Representatives to pass this legislation. Collectively, our organizations represent millions of anglers, boaters, and outdoor businesses that depend on clean water, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable public access.

Recreational fishing and boating are deeply tied to the health of estuaries, coastal waters, and the Great Lakes. Estuaries serve as critical nursery and feeding habitat for many popular recreational fisheries, and clean and accessible waters support local economies built around marinas, guides, charter operators, boat manufacturers, and tackle shops. When water quality declines, fishing opportunities, access, and economic activity decline with it.

We strongly support provisions in the American Water Stewardship Act that reauthorize and strengthen Environmental Protection Agency programs that focus on non-regulatory, collaborative, and science-based solutions to improve water quality and habitat conditions.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (Sec. 2) has delivered measurable improvements to water quality, habitat restoration, and access across the Great Lakes basin. The Great Lakes' fisheries generate \$5.5 billion in economic activity. The investments in this program directly benefit recreational fishing and boating and support local economies throughout the region.

The Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (Sec. 7) plays a critical role in protecting public health and ensuring safe recreational access by supporting state and local monitoring of coastal and Great Lakes waters. Timely and accurate water quality information allows anglers and boaters to make informed decisions and helps communities respond to pollution events that would otherwise limit recreational use.

The National Estuary Program (Sec. 6) and other EPA geographic programs (Secs. 3-5) are also important to recreational fishing and boating. By bringing together states, local governments, scientists, conservation groups and other stakeholders, these programs improve estuary health through voluntary, place-based partnerships. Investments in habitat restoration, nutrient reduction, and resilience directly support fish populations, fishing access, and the long-term sustainability of recreational fisheries.

The American Water Stewardship Act reflects a balanced approach that emphasizes collaboration, accountability, and practical solutions. Continued federal support for these programs is essential to maintaining healthy waters that anglers and boaters rely on and to sustaining the jobs and businesses connected to outdoor recreation.

We appreciate the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's work to advance this legislation and respectfully urge House leadership to bring H.R. 6422 to the floor for passage. We look forward to working with you to ensure continued progress in protecting the nation's waters for recreational use and economic benefit.

Sincerely,

American Fisheries Society
American Sportfishing Association
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (B.A.S.S.)
BoatUS
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Guy Harvey Ocean Fund
International Game Fish Association
Major League Fishing
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
National Wildlife Federation
Trout Unlimited