

May 10, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6150

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell,

We, the undersigned anglers and long-term users of America's national parks, write to you in strong opposition to S. 2807. The proposed legislation would prevent the National Park Service from protecting some of America's most treasured natural resources. This legislation would block the creation of a marine reserve in Biscayne National Park, which is desperately needed to protect the park's threatened coral reef ecosystem and fish populations. Fishing and boating are of great importance to us, and we view the protection of fisheries and marine and coastal resources in and adjacent to our national parks as a way to ensure our children and grandchildren have access to the same incredible fishing opportunities that we have enjoyed.

We have been fishing in and around our national parks for years and understand that high-quality fishing is linked to healthy habitat. In recent years, many public fishing areas have experienced a decline in fish populations and the health of marine and coastal habitats. Such declines threaten the future of fishing. We understand that, at times, regulations are indeed necessary to protect the environment in and around our national parks. In many places, protective action needs to be taken if we want future generations to have the opportunity to enjoy fishing in our national parks.

The recreational fishing industry is extremely important to many local economies and a decline in the health of fisheries and habitat is detrimental to local business. If people are no longer able to fish in our communities, they will go somewhere else, taking their money with them. We cannot be shortsighted in our approach to resource management. We need to understand that conservation now will help to ensure the health of our fisheries for decades to come.

S.2807 would prevent the National Park Service from upholding its responsibility to protect national park resources held in trust for all Americans to enjoy. The Park Service would no longer be able to set limits on fishing when necessary to sustain fish populations, protect wildlife, and restore habitat. Furthermore, the legislation would block plans to create a marine reserve in Biscayne National Park, plans that were based on sound science, years of community engagement, strong public support, and collaboration with state agencies. A failure to create a marine reserve soon will result in the continued decline in the health of coral reefs and fishing opportunities in Biscayne National Park.

As anglers dedicated to preserving and protecting the quality of fishing opportunities in and around our national parks for our children and grandchildren, we strongly urge you to oppose S. 2807.

Sincerely,

Shane Anderson
Olympia, WA

Shawn Meyer-Steele
Miami, FL

Marty Arostegui
Coral Gables, FL

Gil Moratori
Miami, FL

Mary Barley
Islamorada, FL

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Joan Bausch
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Jupiter, FL

Sandra Blake
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Bruce Curtis Bowser
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Nathaniel Reed
Hobe Sound, FL

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