

THE WATCH (from page 3)

In the Department of Energy Trump plans to impose a 17.9 percent cut, about \$2 billion, from core energy/science programs intended to accelerate the transition to new (and cleaner) energy technologies. The Paris climate change agreement funds to help poor countries adapt to climate change and build clean energy has been eliminated and a host of other clean energy/climate change initiatives.

An early budget report that appeared last month in the Washington Post outlined an overall 17 percent budget cut for the NOAA. In a Science & Environment article staff writer Charlie Brennan said, "One critic of those proposed (NOAA) cuts pointed out that the \$990 million savings would fund the Department of Defense for 12 hours."

As fishermen, we need to help communicate these proposed cuts to others and share how they will impact the fish and fishing community. We need research based fisheries management programs that consider climate change and its impact on the fish and fish movement so grow fish to abundance. The proposed Trump NOAA and climate change program cuts will greatly harm the long term health of fisheries and fishing communities.

New Jersey congressmen are not putting fish first

Last month New Jersey Congressmen LoBiondo and Pallone announced through a press release their intention of introducing legislation that would prevent NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) from implementing regulations that would reduce summer flounder harvest limits.

As a charter captain and recreational angler I have always felt it a privilege to fish and take people fishing to experience the joy of catching fish for consumption and sport.

The fish we catch do not belong to us, nor do they belong to the fishermen or congressmen in New Jersey. The fish we catch belong to the people of the United States of America, those living in Kansas, and Minnesota own the fish just as much as those living in New Jersey and Rhode Island. The fish belong to all the people of the United States and should be managed for the benefit of all and not local interests.

The Magnusson-Stevens Act has given NOAA Fisheries the authority to manage the fish to grow them to abundance for all. Under this federal fishing law over 40 fish stocks have been rebuilt. We should not weaken federal fishing laws with legislation that is motivated by the self-interest of a state (or states) and not in the best interest of the country. The Magnusson-Stevens Act puts fish first, not local or state interests.

Recreational harvest limit reductions of summer flounder are needed to rebuild this fish stock whose spawning bio bass has been on the decline for six years in a row and overfishing relative to biological reference points is occurring.

Local political leaders have the interests of their constituents at heart; this is the case with the legislation being considered by New Jersey congressmen. However, the legislation being considered is not in the best interest of the fish which need help to rebuild. Nor is the legislation in the best interest of the people of the United States of America who all share in this resource.

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