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<http://www.house.gov/pallone>

FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

## Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3006

November 13, 2007

REPLY TO:

WASHINGTON OFFICE:

237 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-3006  
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-4671

DISTRICT OFFICES:

TOLL-FREE NUMBER:  
(888) 423-1140

504 BROADWAY  
LONG BRANCH, NJ 07740  
(732) 571-1140

67/69 CHURCH STREET  
KILMER SQUARE  
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901  
(732) 249-8892

Mr. Gregory Hueth, Co-Chairman  
Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund  
2167 Gregory Place  
Sea Girt NJ 08750.

Dear Mr. Hueth:

I am writing to show my support for the newly formed Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund. I share many of your organization's goals, including demanding an immediate peer review of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) data and methodology for summer flounder stock assessment; exploring legislative options to write flexibility into the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act or to extend the rebuilding time frame; and a long-term commitment to supporting independent scientific analysis of the summer flounder stocks.

This summer, I called on NMFS to immediately request that the National Research Center of the National Academy of Science conduct an independent peer review of the summer flounder stock assessment, including targets and methodology. On August 2, 2007 the Director of NMFS, Dr. William Hogarth assured me that he shared my concerns regarding summer flounder and would consider requesting an independent peer review depending upon the findings of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) Scientific and Statistical Committee.

I have also requested that the House Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans hold a hearing to discuss the rebuilding targets set forth in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2007 and relevant issues. This hearing would give recreational and commercial fisherman a chance to testify before Congress and make their case that the current rebuilding targets are unattainable. It will also give members of Congress the opportunity to question NMFS about the "best available science" used in creating the yearly total allowable landing (TAL) limits.

I am happy to report that the Subcommittee has committed to having a hearing in early December. I hope that your organization will be helpful as we begin the process of organizing this important hearing.

In the past few weeks it has become clear to me that we have to be more aggressive in protecting the summer flounder fishery. A recent letter from Dr. Hogarth to MAFMC Chairman W. Peter Jensen, described drastic actions that NMFS would be willing to take

if states do not implement effective measures to ensure that summer flounder stocks reach their rebuilding targets mandated by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Based on Dr. Hogarth's letter, Congress will likely have to pass legislation to fix the summer flounder problem. This could include writing flexibility into the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act or extending the rebuilding deadlines for the summer flounder fishery. I plan on meeting with you and other leaders in the recreational fishing community to discuss legislative remedies in the coming weeks.

In closing, I want to thank your organization for its work on behalf of this fishery, which is so important to the economy of New Jersey. I look forward to working with the Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund as we work to remedy the issues facing summer flounder.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Pallone Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. Jim Donofrio, Executive Director, Recreational Fishing Alliance