



For Immediate Release
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Rep. Donalds Introduces Bill To Bolster Fishery Disaster Relief

WASHINGTON – Yesterday, Congressman Byron Donalds (R-FL) released the following statement introducing legislation to improve the federal regulatory process associated with the allocation of fishery disaster relief. The [Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act \(FISHES Act\)](#) seeks to expedite the distribution of federal disaster relief following official fishery disaster declarations—which the State of Florida has requested six times since 2012.

This bill is co-led by Rep. Mary Peltola (D-AK) and has more than a dozen bipartisan cosponsors, including Representatives: Bilirakis (R-FL), Moskowitz (D-FL), Dunn (R-FL), Carter (D-LA), Nehls (R-TX), Moylan (R-GU), Rutherford (R-FL), Webster (R-FL), Luna (R-FL), Radewagen (R-AS), Higgins (R-LA) and Mast (R-FL).

“The devastation incurred by the U.S. seafood industry in Southwest Florida following Hurricane Ian was catastrophic, and the impact still persists. Our waterways are the lifeblood of our economy and the community, and it’s always been my commitment to advocate for water’s vitality—which ultimately benefits countless families, businesses, and the overall development of Florida’s 19th Congressional District. I am proud to introduce the bipartisan FISHES Act, and I thank every member supporting this effort.” – **Congressman Byron Donalds**

“Rep. Donalds legislation is extremely important for the State of Florida which has unfortunately had to request six different fishery disaster declarations in the last ten years. Setting a deadline for OMB to approve fishery disaster spend plans is critical to provide timely financial support to the fishermen, processors, and our communities after being affected by a natural disaster.” – **Roger Young, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission**

“Burdensome federal regulations exist in so many areas of environmental and energy policy, from our onerous energy permitting process to states’ ability to secure disaster relief funding. The American Conservation Coalition Action (ACC Action) applauds this bipartisan effort to cut red tape for a more prosperous, cleaner future.” – **Morgan Brummund, American Conservation Coalition Action**

“On behalf of the National Association of Charterboat Operators, NACO, representing for-hire owners and operators across the U. S. and the Southern Offshore Fishing Association, SOFA, the Gulf of Mexico Commercial Grouper Fishermen, I wish to thank Representative Donalds for his work on the FISHES ACT. This legislation is long overdue. Fisheries Disasters, natural and man-made, seriously harm the many small family fishing businesses and the coastal communities they work from. These small family fishing businesses provide fresh Gulf Seafood for consumers and recreational fishing opportunities to the public. Disasters take a serious toll on economic and social infrastructure, and disaster funding is needed quickly to help folks return to normal. The current disaster funding relief sometimes takes up to four years to be placed in the hands of those who need it. This bill will speed up the bureaucratic process and should help provide funding soon after a fisheries disaster declaration.” – **Capt. Bob Zales II, President, NACO**

“The Marine Industries Association of Southwest Florida & Tampa Bay happily pledges our support in favor of the FISHES Act.” – **Kyle Good, Marine Industries Association of Southwest Florida & Tampa Bay**

“Disasters like hurricanes and oil spills can seriously damage our coasts. This bill will help coastal communities get disaster assistance funding sooner to rebuild coastal habitats, so people and birds can recover more quickly after a disaster strikes.” – **Remy Moncrieffe, Marine Conservation Policy Manager, National Audubon Society**

“The Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC) and its membership wishes to express their support for requiring the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to approve or deny spend plans within a certain amount of time and are appreciative of the Congressman’s effort to make the fishery disaster determination process more efficient and timelier.” – **Dave Donaldson, Executive Director, Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission**

Background:

Specifically, this bill:

- Seeks to improve the federal regulatory processes associated with fishery disaster relief funding within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- Cuts red tape by enacting a 30-day decision requirement for OMB to deny/approve the State’s spending plan, which will ultimately expedite the federal fishery disaster relief funding process overall.

More:

For full bill text of the FISHES Act see [HERE](#).

For Congress.gov bill summary see [HERE](#).

For bill graphics rollout see [HERE](#).

For social media rollout see [HERE](#).

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