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(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to establish the Fisheries and Ecological Resilience Program and to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report on the competitiveness of domestic seafood producers in domestic and global seafood trade.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. PELTOLA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to establish the Fisheries and Ecological Resilience Program and to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to submit to Congress a report on the competitiveness of domestic seafood producers in domestic and global seafood trade.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Fisheries Improvement
3 and Seafood Health Act of 2024”.

4 **SEC. 2. RESILIENT FISHERIES.**

5 (a) FISHERIES AND ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE PRO-
6 GRAM.—Section 305 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
7 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1855) is
8 amended by adding at the end the following:

9 “(1) FISHERIES AND ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE PRO-
10 GRAM.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting
12 through the Director of the National Marine Fish-
13 eries Service, shall establish a program in the Na-
14 tional Marine Fisheries Service to be known as the
15 ‘Fisheries and Ecological Resilience Program’ (re-
16 ferred to in this subsection as the ‘Program’).

17 “(2) DIRECTOR.—The Secretary, acting
18 through the Director of the National Marine Fish-
19 eries Service, shall appoint a senior official of the
20 National Marine Fisheries Service to serve as the di-
21 rector of the Program (referred to in this subsection
22 as the ‘Program Director’).

23 “(3) MISSION.—The mission of the Program
24 shall be to—

1 “(A) advance ocean and ecosystem under-
2 standing and modeling to project future ocean
3 conditions and to inform fishery management;

4 “(B) assess the current and anticipated
5 impacts from, and vulnerability of, stocks of
6 fish to changing environmental and ecological
7 conditions;

8 “(C) assess the anticipated impacts to
9 coastal communities, economies, and traditional
10 ways of life due to changing fishing and marine
11 ecosystem conditions;

12 “(D) develop innovative, science-based
13 tools, processes, and decision support systems
14 for meeting conservation and management
15 standards under this Act in response to chang-
16 ing environmental and ecological conditions;

17 “(E) engage with and educate fishers, fish-
18 ing communities, State, local, Tribal, and com-
19 munity leaders, and others on future ocean con-
20 ditions and the impacts of changing environ-
21 mental and ecological conditions on fisheries;

22 “(F) create and provide tools, training,
23 and support to Councils for management of and
24 adaptation to changing ecosystems and fish-
25 eries; and

1 “(G) coordinate across the National Oce-
2 anic and Atmospheric Administration and other
3 relevant agencies to increase synergies and
4 streamline efforts to better understand and
5 model changing ocean ecosystems and increase
6 fishery resilience.

7 “(4) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Program Direc-
8 tor shall be responsible for carrying out activities to
9 implement the mission in paragraph (3), including
10 by—

11 “(A) conducting cooperative research with
12 fishers, communities, academic institutions,
13 nongovernmental organizations, and other inter-
14 est parties on changing ecological and environ-
15 mental conditions and impacts to stocks of fish
16 and other marine resources;

17 “(B) coordinating across the National Oce-
18 anic and Atmospheric Administration to
19 produce and collate information about ocean
20 and ecosystem modeling, forecasts, and projec-
21 tions for fishery management purposes;

22 “(C) communicating to fishers, fishing
23 communities, and the public about the risks
24 posed by changing ecological and environmental

1 conditions to the conservation and management
2 of stocks of fish and other marine resources;

3 “(D) conducting assessments to determine
4 the vulnerability of stocks of fish to impacts
5 from changing ecological and environmental
6 conditions;

7 “(E) identifying and improving existing
8 processes and structures to incorporate ecologi-
9 cal and environmental information into manage-
10 ment of stocks of fish;

11 “(F) identifying gaps where innovative
12 management processes can be developed to fa-
13 cilitate incorporation of rapidly changing eco-
14 logical and environmental information;

15 “(G) piloting innovative tools and ap-
16 proaches to increase the adaptive capacity of
17 fisheries managers to the impacts of changing
18 ecological and environmental conditions on
19 stocks of fish;

20 “(H) providing the Councils with assess-
21 ments and guidance on management actions
22 and structured processes to increase the resil-
23 ience of stocks of fish identified as vulnerable to
24 impacts from changing ecological and environ-
25 mental conditions;

1 “(I) incorporating qualitative data, lived
2 experiences, and priorities of fishers, commu-
3 nities, and other interested parties in initiatives
4 to increase the resilience of stocks of fish and
5 the communities that rely on them to changing
6 ecological and environmental conditions;

7 “(J) communicating frequently with and
8 creating opportunities for cross-regional collabo-
9 ration and learning among Councils and re-
10 gional offices and regional science centers of the
11 National Marine Fisheries Service;

12 “(K) collaborating with the National
13 Ocean Service, the Office of Oceanic and At-
14 mospheric Research, National Oceanic and At-
15 mospheric Administration Cooperative Insti-
16 tutes, the Integrated Ocean Observing System
17 Regional Associations, and others to maintain a
18 comprehensive digital database of ecological and
19 environmental information relevant to fisheries
20 and marine ecosystems, including regional
21 ocean model outputs, ecosystem projections,
22 and other data and information;

23 “(L) conducting a cross-agency assessment
24 to avoid redundancies and consolidate fishery

1 resilience efforts and ecosystem modeling under
2 the Program; and

3 “(M) compiling information and analyzing
4 progress made to implement management meas-
5 ures to increase resilience to changing ecological
6 and environmental conditions and respond to
7 shifting populations of stocks of fish and chang-
8 ing productivity.

9 “(5) COORDINATION.—The mission of the Pro-
10 gram and the activities of the Program Director
11 shall be carried out in coordination with other offices
12 of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the
13 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
14 the Councils and respective advisory panels, fishers,
15 academic institutions, nongovernmental organiza-
16 tions, and other interested parties.

17 “(6) STAFF.—In carrying out the requirements
18 of this subsection, the Program Director shall—

19 “(A) appoint full- and part-time employees;

20 “(B) establish a regional ocean modeling
21 and prediction coordination team to fund part-
22 nerships with relevant experts across the Na-
23 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
24 regional science centers, National Oceanic and
25 Atmospheric Administration Cooperative Insti-

1 tutes, Integrated Ocean Observing System Re-
2 gional Associations, and others to produce and
3 deliver coordinated regional forecasts, projec-
4 tions, and other resources to improve regional
5 understand and forecasting of ecosystem
6 changes as needed to inform fishery manage-
7 ment decisions; and

8 “(C) establish management and decision
9 support teams that will support the Councils by
10 utilizing the information produced by the teams
11 authorized in subparagraph (B) for developing
12 assessments and guidance on management ac-
13 tions to increase the resilience of stocks of fish
14 vulnerable to impacts from changing ecological
15 and environmental conditions.

16 “(7) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2
17 years after the date of the enactment of the Fish-
18 eries Improvement and Seafood Health Act of 2024,
19 and every 2 years thereafter during the period in
20 which appropriations are authorized for the Program
21 under paragraph (8), the Program Director shall
22 submit to Congress a report on actions taken to ful-
23 fill the requirements of this subsection.

24 “(8) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
25 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-

1 retary to carry out this subsection \$30,000,000 for
2 each of the fiscal years 2025 through 2030.”.

3 (b) COUNCIL TRAINING PROGRAM.—Section
4 302(k)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation
5 and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1852(k)(1)) is amend-
6 ed—

7 (1) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) through
8 (H) as subparagraphs (D) through (I), respectively;

9 (2) by redesignating subparagraph (I) as sub-
10 paragraph (K);

11 (3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the fol-
12 lowing:

13 “(C) relevant impacts from changing envi-
14 ronmental and ecological conditions on fisheries
15 health, range, and other factors that would af-
16 fect the conservation and management of a
17 stock of fish;”;

18 (4) by striking “and” after the semicolon at the
19 end of subparagraph (I), as so redesignated; and

20 (5) by inserting after subparagraph (I), as so
21 redesignated, the following:

22 “(J) ecosystem-based fishery management;
23 and”.

1 (c) FISHERIES RESEARCH.—Section 404 of the Mag-
2 nuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
3 (16 U.S.C. 1881c) is amended—

4 (1) in subsection (a), by inserting “, on changes
5 in geographic range, spatial distribution, and pro-
6 ductivity of a fishery or interrelated fisheries,” after
7 “management”; and

8 (2) in subsection (c)(1), by inserting “changes
9 in geographic range, spatial distribution, and pro-
10 ductivity of a fishery or interrelated fisheries,” after
11 “degradation,”.

12 **SEC. 3. REPORT ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF DOMESTIC**
13 **SEAFOOD PRODUCERS IN DOMESTIC AND**
14 **GLOBAL SEAFOOD TRADE.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
16 date of the enactment of this section, the Comptroller
17 General of the United States shall submit to the Congress
18 a report on the competitiveness of domestic seafood pro-
19 ducers in domestic and global seafood trade.

20 (b) CONTENTS.—The report required by subsection
21 (a) shall—

22 (1) identify Federal laws, regulations, and poli-
23 cies that directly affect the costs of domestic seafood
24 production and seafood industry investment in the
25 United States, compared to the costs of seafood pro-

1 duction and investment in other seafood-producing
2 countries;

3 (2) analyze the competitive position of United
4 States seafood in domestic and global markets, given
5 differences in tariffs and nontariff barriers among
6 countries and changes in trade flows and market
7 share over the last 5 years, highlighting the relative
8 position of the United States compared to other sea-
9 food-producing countries;

10 (3) include an inventory and assessment of
11 Federal domestic programs to help manage costs, fa-
12 cilitate and incentivize domestic capacity and mod-
13 ernization, and facilitate domestic and overseas mar-
14 ket access for United States seafood producers, in-
15 cluding—

16 (A) identification of programs available
17 and unavailable to wild and farmed domestic
18 seafood producers;

19 (B) recommendations to improve the utility
20 of these programs for domestic seafood pro-
21 ducers; and

22 (C) the financial health and stability of the
23 Seafood Inspection Program as provider of sea-
24 food health and catch certificates and other

1 services to domestic seafood producers and ex-
2 porters;

3 (4) provide recommendations for a new Na-
4 tional Seafood Trade Policy to improve the competi-
5 tiveness of United States seafood producers, includ-
6 ing—

7 (A) ways to facilitate interagency coordina-
8 tion under existing authorities and consultation
9 with domestic seafood producers around com-
10 mon goals for seafood tariffs, nontariff barriers,
11 and market access policy;

12 (B) domestic seafood cost control and in-
13 vestment programs; and

14 (C) domestic seafood producers' access to
15 financial support programs;

16 (5) identify trade barriers to United States sea-
17 food production that are vulnerable to dispute settle-
18 ment through the World Trade Organization or oth-
19 erwise under trade agreements;

20 (6) include a strategy for enforcing violations of
21 trade agreements related to such trade barriers; and

22 (7) identify like-minded trading partners for
23 specific trade barriers that could act as co-complain-
24 ants or primary complainants on disputes that are

1 systemically or economically important to the United
2 States.

3 (c) **QUARTERLY REPORTS.**—Following the submis-
4 sion of the report required by subsection (a), the Comp-
5 troller General of the United States shall submit to the
6 Congress quarterly reports on progress towards resolving
7 cases or filing disputes to resolve trade barriers described
8 in subsection (b)(5).

9 **SEC. 4. ECOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDER-**
10 **ATIONS.**

11 Section 303(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
12 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1853(a))
13 is amended—

14 (1) in paragraph (14), by striking “and;” and
15 inserting a semicolon;

16 (2) in paragraph (15), by striking the period at
17 the end and inserting “; and”; and

18 (3) by adding at the end the following:

19 “(16) consider and account for the effects of
20 changing ecological and environmental conditions on
21 the fishery and describe how the management meas-
22 ures contained in the plan or plan amendment ad-
23 dress such changing conditions.”.