

VETO—S. 906
(PM 63)

MESSAGE

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

RETURNING

WITHOUT MY APPROVAL S. 906, THE DRIFTNET MODERNIZATION
AND BYCATCH REDUCTION ACT



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To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning, without my approval, S. 906, the Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act. America's fishermen have made great sacrifices to ensure that our Nation's marine fisheries are a sustainable economic engine for coastal communities. Under my Administration, the number of United States fish stocks subject to overfishing is at a historic low. This achievement is the result of a transparent and collaborative regulatory process that is supported by regional fishery management councils. At council meetings, fishermen work with Federal Government and State government representatives to meet their statutory obligations under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

In passing S. 906, the Congress has ignored the fact that the regional fishery management process has had strong, bipartisan support since its creation. By forcing the West Coast drift gillnet fishery to use alternative gear that has not been proven to be an economically viable substitute for gillnets, the Congress is effectively terminating the fishery. As a result, an estimated 30 fishing vessels, all of which are operated by family-owned small businesses, will no longer be able to bring their bounty to shore. At a time when our Nation has a seafood trade deficit of nearly \$17 billion, S. 906 will exacerbate this imbalance.

Further, S. 906 will not achieve its purported conservation benefits. The West Coast drift gillnet fishery is subject to robust legal and regulatory requirements for environmental protection that equal or exceed the environmental protections that apply to foreign fisheries. Without this fishery, Americans will import more swordfish and other species from foreign sources that frequently have more bycatch than our own fisheries. If the Congress wants to address bycatch, it should insist on a level playing field for imported seafood instead of crushing American fishing families.

My Administration has done more for American fishermen than any President before me. On May 7, 2020, I signed an Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth to bolster our domestic seafood industry while curbing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing abroad. On June 5, 2020, I issued a Proclamation on Modifying the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument to open it to commercial fishing that is conducted in accordance with the Magnuson-Stevens Act and other applicable laws, regulations, and requirements. And as fishermen struggled to stay on the water during the pandemic, I issued a Memorandum on Protecting the United States Lobster Industry and later made approximately \$530 million available, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Seafood Trade Relief Program, to support the United States seafood industry and fishermen affected by retaliatory tariffs from foreign governments.

My Administration would support provisions of the enrolled bill, if passed separately, which would authorize fee collection in a different fishery—the Pacific Halibut fishery. This authority is needed to implement a provision of the International Pacific Halibut Commission Convention, to which the United States is a party. However, for the sake of American fishermen nationwide, I will not let the Congress circumvent the fisheries management process by effectively terminating a fishery without appropriate consultation and input from fishery management councils. If this occurred, it would increase our reliance on imported seafood and take away the livelihoods of hard-working Americans and their family businesses. It is my duty to return S. 906 to the Senate without my approval.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *January 1, 2021.*

