

Jones Amendment Passes in Budget Bill

JONES AMENDMENT TO BLOCK CATCH SHARES PASSES; HEADED TO PRESIDENT'S DESK

The following was released by Congressman Walter Jones (R-North Carolina):

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today Congress approved legislation (H.R. 1473) to fund the government for the rest of Fiscal Year 2011 which includes a version of an amendment offered by Congressman Walter B. Jones (NC-3) to block funding for approval of new fisheries catch shares programs. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) had proposed to spend \$36 million to institute new catch share programs, which would destroy commercial and fishing jobs and communities across the country. The Jones amendment to block this funding was originally approved by the House on February 19, 2011 with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 259 to 159. The language will prohibit the federal government from using any Fiscal Year 2011 funds to approve new catch shares programs for fisheries along the Eastern Seaboard and the Gulf of Mexico. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 1473 this afternoon, and the bill is expected to be approved by the Senate and signed into law by the President by Friday night.

This is a shot in the arm for fishermen and a shot across the bow of the National Marine Fisheries Service, said Congressman Jones. The last thing our government should be doing in these economic times is spending millions of taxpayer dollars to expand programs that will put even more Americans out of work. NMFS would be wise to take heed of the opposition of fishermen, the public and the Congress to their catch shares agenda; were not going away.

The language to defund catch shares is supported by a broad coalition of fishermen, consumer organizations, boat builders and communities from around the country including the Recreational Fishing Alliance, American Sportfishing Association, National Marine Manufacturers Association, Saving Seafood, Southern Shrimp Alliance, Commercial Fishermen of America, Southeast Fisheries Association, North Carolina Fisheries Association, Garden State Seafood Association, Florida Keys Fishermens Assoc., Long Island (NY) Fishermens Assoc. and Food & Water Watch. Many members of Congress and Senators from both parties joined Congressman Jones in advocating for this language including Congressmen Barney Frank (MA) and Frank Pallone (NJ), as well as Senators Scott Brown (MA), Charles Schumer (NY) and others.