



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 18, 2015

Contact: Kevin Roig, 202-225-3901

Congressman Graves Introduces Legislation to Boost Fisheries Conservation

Washington, DC – Congressman Garret Graves (South Louisiana) and Congresswoman Gwen Graham (Florida) recently introduced [HR 3462, The Sport Fish Restoration and Safe Boating Trust Fund Authorization Act of 2015](#), legislation that would reauthorize the highly successful conservation program that has helped restore our coast and improve access to fishing for sportsmen and women across the nation.

For decades, the program has been a pillar for fisheries conservation funding in the United States and supports an array of national recreational fishing, boating and conservation efforts. A portion of sales related to fishing tackle and equipment, motorboat fuel, imported boats, small engines and fishing equipment are allocated to federal and state programs for recreational boating safety, fisheries management and coastal restoration. In Louisiana, the fund has helped identify, prepare, and fund construction of many of our successful coastal wetlands restoration projects through the Coastal Wetlands Planning Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA).

"The Sport Fish Restoration Fund has played a critical role in the success of our agency. These funds help us monitor fish populations through advanced sampling techniques, track movements of critical sport fish through our Citizen Scientist Tagging program, improve fishing and boating access to the anglers of our state, and helps to bring the sport of fishing to our citizens who otherwise may have little opportunity. I want to thank Congressman Garret Graves and Congresswoman Gwen Graham for sponsoring this legislation," said Robert Barham, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Secretary.

"The CWPPRA program plays an important role in efforts by coastal parishes and the state to address coastal land loss and community vulnerability. I'm delighted that the Congressman has taken on this legislation to help advance our Coastal Master Plan. Without him, we'd be underwater," said Kyle Graham, Executive Director of Louisiana's Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority.

“I am proud to champion this legislation,” said Rep. Graves. “In the last decade alone, this program has built boat ramps to help our community access fishing opportunities, improved boating safety, provided fishery management assistance and has aided in the restoration of thousands of acres of coastal wetlands and habitat – an ecosystem whose sustainability is critical for the economy, culture and protection of South Louisiana.”

There are an estimated 60 million anglers in this country, and an estimated 88 million boating participants. In 2012, there were nearly 17 million recreational boats in use.

“Enjoying the outdoors through recreational fishing and boating is a way of life in Louisiana. It’s part of the heritage of living in Sportsman’s Paradise,” added Graves. “Every time you pick up a pack of soft plastics or pay your launch fee, you’re investing into habitat conservation and safe boating initiatives that protect the sport and help restore the fish and wetland habitats for this and future generations.”

According to the Angling and Boating Alliance, angling generates over \$47 billion in retail sales with a \$115 billion impact on the U.S. economy – statistics that represent over one million jobs and \$35 billion to the economy in the form of salaries, wages, and business earnings.

The recreational boating and fishing community made the following statement about the Sport Fish Restoration and Safe Boating Trust Fund Authorization Act of 2015:

“We are pleased to offer our strongest support for HR 3462, The Sport Fish Restoration and Safe Boating Trust Fund Authorization Act of 2015. The monies generated and distributed through this trust fund are the financial backbone for aquatic natural resources management across the country. It is a little known fact that anglers and boaters provide most of the dollars that allow every U.S. citizen the opportunity to enjoy quality time boating and fishing. We are grateful to Reps. Graves and Graham for their leadership in helping to ensure that this fund remains healthy and viable for years to come. Generations of anglers and boaters owe these legislators a debt a gratitude for introducing legislation that will conserve and enhance the trust fund,” said Jen Mock Schaeffer, Angling and Boating Alliance.

###