

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3658

To support healthy fisheries in dynamic ocean conditions, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 15, 2026

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. WARREN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To support healthy fisheries in dynamic ocean conditions,
and for other purposes.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Supporting Healthy
5 Interstate Fisheries in Transition Act” or the “SHIFT
6 Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. SHIFTING STOCKS.**

8 Section 805(a) of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Co-
9 operative Management Act (16 U.S.C. 5104(a)) is amend-
10 ed by adding at the end the following:

1 “(3) The Secretary shall encourage the Com-
 2 mission to include data regarding changes to the
 3 ecosystem in its coastal fishery management plans or
 4 plan amendments, and when establishing or revising
 5 quota allocations between any State, Federal, or
 6 other management unit in such a plan or amend-
 7 ment, the Secretary shall account for, using the best
 8 scientific information available, any impact from eco-
 9 logical changes on coastal fishery resources, includ-
 10 ing—

11 “(A) any change or shifting trend in fish
 12 abundance and distribution; and

13 “(B) any potential ecological impact, in-
 14 cluding food web and habitat impacts, arising
 15 from such revised quota allocations.”.

16 **SEC. 3. ACTION BY THE SECRETARY.**

17 Section 304(f) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
 18 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1854(f))
 19 is amended—

20 (1) in paragraph (1)—

21 (A) by striking “as provided in paragraph
 22 (3)” and inserting “as provided in paragraph
 23 (2)”; and

1 (B) by striking “No jointly prepared plan”
 2 and all that follows through “each Council con-
 3 cerned.”;

4 (2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as para-
 5 graph (3);

6 (3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the fol-
 7 lowing:

8 “(2)(A) If determined necessary by the Sec-
 9 retary or at the request of a Council, based on the
 10 criteria described in subparagraph (B) and in ac-
 11 cordance with procedures established by the Sec-
 12 retary, the Secretary shall determine whether a sub-
 13 stantial portion of a fishery extends beyond the geo-
 14 graphical area of authority of any one Council.

15 “(B) Based on the best scientific information
 16 available, the Secretary shall—

17 “(i) review any indicator of—

18 “(I) a documented shift in stock dis-
 19 tribution indicating a significant shift of a
 20 stock’s average abundance has moved into
 21 another council’s jurisdiction;

22 “(II) a significant shift in the average
 23 proportion of a fishery’s recreational fish-
 24 ing effort into another council’s jurisdic-
 25 tion;

1 “(III) a significant shift in the aver-
 2 age proportion of a fishery’s landings rev-
 3 enue accruing to another council’s jurisdic-
 4 tion; or

5 “(IV) any other fishery-specific indi-
 6 cator determined by the Secretary or rel-
 7 evant council; and

8 “(ii) consult with the relevant council to
 9 review any indicator under clause (i) to ensure
 10 a shift is not explained by normal fluctuations
 11 or non-ecological factors, such as—

12 “(I) regulatory requirements;

13 “(II) consumer demand or market
 14 forces; or

15 “(III) socioeconomic factors.

16 “(C) If the Secretary determines under
 17 subparagraph (A) that a substantial portion of
 18 a fishery extends beyond the geographical area
 19 of authority of any one Council—

20 “(i) the Secretary shall, not later than
 21 6 months after the date on which the re-
 22 quest is made under subparagraph (A), no-
 23 tify the Councils concerned; and

24 “(ii) each of the Councils concerned
 25 shall, not later than 1 year after the date

1 on which the notification is made under
2 clause (i), by a majority of the voting
3 members, present and voting—

4 “(I) designate one of the Coun-
5 cils concerned to prepare a fishery
6 management plan for such fishery, or
7 any necessary amendment to such a
8 plan, if the fishery requires conserva-
9 tion and management under this Act;
10 or

11 “(II) agree to jointly prepare a
12 fishery management plan for such
13 fishery, or any necessary amendment
14 to such a plan, if the fishery requires
15 conservation and management under
16 this Act.

17 “(D) In the case that the Councils con-
18 cerned are unable to meet the requirements of
19 subparagraph (C)(ii) within the time period
20 specified in such subparagraph, or if their rec-
21 ommendations do not agree, the Secretary
22 shall—

23 “(i) designate one of the Councils con-
24 cerned to prepare a fishery management
25 plan for such fishery, or any necessary

1 amendment to such a plan, if the fishery
2 requires conservation and management
3 under this Act; or

4 “(ii) require that such a plan or any
5 necessary amendment be prepared jointly
6 by the Councils concerned, if the fishery
7 requires conservation and management
8 under this Act.

9 “(E) Not later than 2 years after the date
10 on which the last of the Councils concerned
11 makes a decision pursuant to subparagraph
12 (C)(ii) or the date on which the Secretary
13 makes a decision pursuant to subparagraph
14 (D), and at such other times as required under
15 this Act, the Council or Councils designated
16 under subparagraph (C)(ii) or (D) (as applica-
17 ble) shall establish a fishery management plan,
18 or make any necessary amendment to such a
19 plan, if the fishery requires conservation and
20 management under this Act.

21 “(F)(i) If determined necessary by the
22 Secretary or at the request of a Council in ac-
23 cordance with the procedures established under
24 subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall deter-
25 mine whether a fishery described in subpara-

graph (C) no longer has a substantial portion that extends beyond the geographical area of authority of any one Council.

“(ii) If the Secretary determines under clause (i) that a fishery no longer has a substantial portion that extends beyond the geographical area of authority of any one Council—

“(I) the Secretary shall determine in which Council’s geographical area of authority the fishery is predominant; and

“(II) not later than 2 years after the date on which the determination under subclause (I) is made, and at such other times as required under this Act, the Council determined under such subclause shall establish a fishery management plan, or make any necessary amendment to such a plan, if the fishery requires conservation and management under this Act.

“(iii) Notwithstanding subsection (h), on the date of implementation of a fishery management plan under clause (ii)(II), any preceding fishery management plan with respect to such fishery is repealed.

1 “(G) The Secretary shall, through notice
 2 and comment rulemaking, identify its criteria in
 3 determining under subparagraphs (C) and (F)
 4 whether a substantial portion of a fishery ex-
 5 tends beyond the geographical area of authority
 6 of any one Council.”; and

7 (4) by adding at the end the following:

8 “(4) No jointly prepared plan or amendment, as
 9 described in paragraph (1)(B), (2)(C)(ii)(II), or
 10 (2)(D)(ii) may be submitted to the Secretary unless
 11 it is approved by a majority of the voting members,
 12 present and voting, of each Council concerned.

13 “(5) This subsection shall not apply with re-
 14 spect to any fishery to which section 302(a)(3) ap-
 15 plies.

16 “(6) Nothing in this subsection shall be con-
 17 strued as modifying or superseding subsection (e),
 18 section 302(h)(1), or any other provision of this
 19 Act.”.

20 **SEC. 4. FISHERY AUTHORIZATION.**

21 Section 305(a) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery
 22 Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1855(a))
 23 is amended—

1 (1) in paragraph (2), by striking “as to require
2 notification under paragraph (3)” and inserting
3 “under this subsection”;

4 (2) by striking paragraphs (3) and (4) and in-
5 serting the following:

6 “(3) The Secretary may add a new fishery or
7 fishing gear for inclusion on the list under this sub-
8 section only after the Secretary determines that a
9 sufficient analysis, in accordance with the guidance
10 under paragraph (7), has been conducted by an ap-
11 propriate Council, and the analysis concludes the po-
12 tential new fishery or fishing gear—

13 “(A) will have minimal adverse effects (as
14 defined in section 600.810(a) of title 50, Code
15 of Federal Regulations (or successor regula-
16 tions)) on essential fish habitat; and

17 “(B) will have minimal adverse effects on
18 existing fisheries, fishing communities, and the
19 marine ecosystem, as determined by the Sec-
20 retary based on the best scientific information
21 available.

22 “(4)(A) Not later than 18 months after the
23 date of enactment of the Supporting Healthy Inter-
24 state Fisheries in Transition Act, and at least once
25 every 5 years thereafter, each Council shall review

1 the fisheries and gear on the list under this sub-
2 section that are under its authority and submit to
3 the Secretary proposed changes to such list, if need-
4 ed, in specific and narrow terms, including geo-
5 graphic range. Such proposed changes may include
6 recommending new fisheries or gear or removal of
7 fisheries or gear and shall be accompanied by infor-
8 mation on the effects of new fisheries or gear or re-
9 moval of fisheries or gear on essential fish habitat,
10 existing fisheries, fishing communities, and the ma-
11 rine ecosystems, for the Secretary to review under
12 paragraph (3).

13 “(B) As soon as practicable after receiving a
14 proposed change under subparagraph (A) to add a
15 new fishery or gear to the list under this subsection,
16 the Secretary shall make a determination under
17 paragraph (3). If the Secretary determines that the
18 proposed change is consistent with such paragraph,
19 this Act, and other applicable law, the Secretary
20 shall publish a proposed list under this subsection to
21 include such fishery or gear, along with the appro-
22 priate Council’s analysis and the Secretary’s deter-
23 mination of sufficiency of the analysis consistent
24 with paragraph (3), and provide an opportunity for

1 public comment before publishing the final, revised
2 list.

3 “(C) The Secretary may permit, pursuant to
4 section 318(d), on a limited interim basis, fishing
5 activity that is not included on the list under this
6 subsection, if—

7 “(i) the experimental fishing permit is de-
8 signed and implemented so as to yield informa-
9 tion necessary and currently lacking for the de-
10 velopment of a fishery management plan or
11 amendment to such plan under section
12 302(h)(1) and section 303;

13 “(ii) the Secretary collects, evaluates, and,
14 notwithstanding section 402(b), makes public
15 the data generated by the experimental fishing
16 activity at the end of each permit year, and
17 based on such evaluation, the Council renders a
18 determination of whether the fishing activity
19 should be continued, either in the form of a
20 subsequent year of experimental fishing under
21 this paragraph, or in the form of a fishery man-
22 aged under a fishery management plan pursu-
23 ant to section 302(h)(1) and section 303; and

24 “(iii) the data collected from, and the eval-
25 uation of the Secretary of, the fishing activity

1 are included in any fishery management plan or
2 amendment that is prepared for management of
3 the fishing activity.

4 “(D) As soon as practicable after publication of
5 a final, revised list under this subsection in accord-
6 ance with subparagraph (B), the appropriate Council
7 shall, in accordance with section 303, prepare a fish-
8 ery management plan or a plan amendment, if such
9 fishery requires conservation and management under
10 this Act, and the Secretary has approved and imple-
11 mented such plan or amendment. Nothing in the
12 preceding sentence shall affect the authority to oper-
13 ate under a permit issued under section 318(d).

14 “(E) No person or vessel may employ fishing
15 gear or engage in fisheries that are not listed under
16 this subsection without prior written notice to the
17 Council. Upon receiving notice pursuant to the pre-
18 ceding sentence, the Council shall make a determina-
19 tion to either prohibit the person or vessel to employ
20 the fishing gear or engage in the fishery that is not
21 listed or make a recommendation to the Secretary to
22 add the fishery or fishing gear for inclusion on the
23 list under this subsection in accordance with the re-
24 quirements under this subsection.”; and

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

1 “(7) The Secretary shall issue guidance for
2 making a determination under paragraph (3).

3 “(8) Nothing in this subsection shall restrict
4 the issuance of or requirements for the experimental
5 permitting process under section 318(d), the cooper-
6 ative research and management program under sec-
7 tion 318, the bycatch reduction engineering program
8 under section 316, or other research or data collec-
9 tion activities authorized under this Act.”.

10 **SEC. 5. REPORTS.**

11 Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment
12 of this Act and not less frequently than every 5 years
13 thereafter, the Secretary of Commerce shall submit a re-
14 port to Congress on implementation of this Act and the
15 amendments made by this Act, including metrics on re-
16 solved transboundary fisheries and ecological data integra-
17 tion.

18 **SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

19 This Act, and the amendments made by this Act,
20 shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the
21 date of enactment of this Act.

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