



# National Association of Charterboat Operators

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## **Member Associations :**

Alaska Charter Association  
Beach Haven Charter Fishing Assn.  
Black River Charter Guides Assn  
Cape Cod Charter Boat Assn  
Cape May County Party & Charter Boat  
Captree Boatman Open & Charter Boats  
Charterboat Assn. Of Puget Sound  
Chicago Sportfishing Assn.  
Deep Creek Charterboat Assn.  
Destin Charterboat Assn  
Eastern Lake Erie CharterBoat Assn.  
Florida Guides Association, Inc.  
Genesee Charterboat Assn, Inc.  
Golden Gate Fishermen's Assn.  
Homer Charter Assn.  
Ilwaco Charter Assn.  
Indiana's North Coast Charter Assn.  
Kenosha Charterboat Assn.  
Key West Charter Boatmen's Assn.  
Lake Michigan Sportfishing Assn.  
Marathon Guides Association  
Marco Island Charter Captain's Assn.  
Maryland Charterboat Assn.  
Michigan Charterboat Assn.  
Michigan City Charterboat Assn.  
Mississippi Charterboat Captain's Assn.  
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Panama City Boatmen Assn  
Pennsylvania Lake Erie Charter Captain  
Pensacola Charterboat Assn.  
Petersburg Charterboat Assn.  
Port Aransas Boatmen Inc.  
Prince William Sound Charter Boat Assn  
Seward Charterboat Assn.  
Sitka Charter Boat Operators Assn.  
Sportfishing Association of California  
Steinhatchee Charterboat Assn  
Thumb Area Charter Captains Assn.  
Virginia Charter Boat Assn.  
Westport Charterboat Association

February 1, 2007

Secretary Condoleezza Rice  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Dr. Rice,

NACO is a national association of charter boat owners and operators that was established in 1991. We represent over 3,300 individuals across the United States. A significant number of our members live and operate charter fishing vessels in Alaska where Halibut is a very important species to them.

On January 19, 2007 the International Pacific Halibut Commission voted to impose a 1 Halibut bag limit on recreational anglers who fish from charter boats during portions of June and July. On behalf of our Alaska membership we wish to express our grave concern with an international entity making domestic allocation decisions for the United States. Clearly we believe domestic allocation decisions should comply with the Magnuson/Stevens Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which allow our citizens adequate public notice and comment. Congress has established regional fishery management councils and NEPA to protect our public resources and assure fair and equitable treatment of their constituents, international entities do not comply with the same rules.

According to the American Sportfishing Association, Halibut is one of the most important recreational species in the United States. In 2004 there were over 468 thousand recreational fishing license sold in the State of Alaska. Recreational charter fishing is a major component of the U.S. economy. According to an analysis performed by Southwick Associates in 2001 saltwater recreational fishing in Alaska supported 4,556 jobs paying almost \$98 million in wages and salaries. Retail sales for the recreational sector generated nearly \$241 million in addition to over \$1 million in sales and fuel tax. They estimated the output of saltwater recreational fishing at \$391 million in that year alone. Please note these estimates are based on 2001 numbers so it stands to reason 2006 would be higher impact estimates. This is an industry that obviously deserves recognition in fishery management decisions. We believe the recent reauthorization of the Magnuson/Stevens Act requires regional fishery management councils and the National Marine Fisheries Service to analyze economic impacts to our great Nation regarding allocation issues.

Recreational fishing is all about perception. In order for these anglers to continue to make these major contributions to the economy they need bag limits that justify these expenditures. Most Alaska charter boats have reported to us significant cancellations due to the IPHC decision. We and our Alaska membership believe the drop dead number to be a 2 fish bag limit, anything lower will negatively impact the economic contribution from the recreational sector to the U.S. economy.

We firmly believe that recreational bag limits should be considered a domestic issue and the appropriate United States Regional Fishery Management Council should determine allocation of species. We urge you to become involved in this issue and protect one of the most valuable industries to our United States.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding this issue and should you need further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Bobbi M. Walker  
Executive Director