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## MRAA Asks White House to Save Recreational Fishing

Boca Grande—The Marine Retailers Association of America is very concerned about the direction the President's Council on Environmental Quality may be taking on recreational fishing. Within the next couple of months the Administration is planning to issue a final report intended to provide management guidance and management of the nation's oceans, coastal areas, and Great Lakes.

The special Task Force was charged with developing a national policy for conserving and managing ocean territory and the Great Lakes. The problem becomes more complicated because the policy may extend far into a tributary's watershed, as far as 2,000 miles from an ocean, thereby affecting most of the continental United States.

MRAA believes draft copies of the preliminary report from the Task Force have been written with a clear anti-fishing bias by lumping commercial and recreational fishing together and mentioning they are harmful to the resources and mentioning several times overfishing.

The final report must balance ocean and Great lakes uses with conservation. The report must mention the benefits of recreational angling, which contribute billions of dollars to the economy, millions of dollars in tax revenues, and over one million jobs. Without this recognition, decisions made using the report of the Task Force could close saltwater and freshwater recreational fishing areas.

"We see a real threat to recreational fishing and boating of some of the public policy recommendations of the draft report. MRAA believes the tone of the report is biased against fishing and boating. We recommend the report be rewritten to include the requirement that the whole picture of mitigating economic conditions, such as the effect on jobs and tax dollars, be considered when developing public access policies," said Ed Lofgren, MRAA Chairman.

Join with us by visiting [www.keepamericafishing.org](http://www.keepamericafishing.org) to send a letter to the President and other key policy makers. Ask the White House to include recreational fishing and boating in the national policy.

*Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA) is the national trade association for the retail segment of the recreational boating industry. For further information go to [www.mraa.com](http://www.mraa.com) or call 941.964.2534.*

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