**Cosponsor—The Fishery Improvement to Streamline untimely regulatory Hurdles post Emergency Situation Act (FISHES Act)**

**Background:**

- This bill seeks to improve the federal regulatory processes associated with fishery disaster relief funding within the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- After Congress appropriates fishery disaster relief funding, funding may be dispersed IF:
  - 1. NOAA approves the state-submitted spend plan; and
  - 2. OMB approves the state-submitted spend plan.
- Currently, OMB has no incentive to approve the spend plan because OMB has no deadline to approve.
  - Disaster funding process: Congress appropriates funds → Within 14 days, NOAA coordinates with OMB to determine allocation of funds → Within 120 days, State creates and submits spending plan to NOAA → Within 90 days, NOAA approves spend plan and submits to OMB for approval → OMB approves spend plan (but no timeline to do so) → State receives approval to spend funds in accordance with their approved spend plan.
- The State of Florida alone has requested fishery disaster declarations on six different occasions since 2012—however for each occasion, over two years+ had lapsed from the time of approval to when the fishery disaster relief funds were ultimately made available.
- States apply for federal fishery disaster relief for a variety of reasons, including day-to-day extreme weather; water quality issues; hurricanes; etc.
  - Fishery specific impacts include: (1) boats and dockage can be damaged or destroyed; (2) fishing equipment can be lost or destroyed; (3) commercial fishermen and charter captains can lose revenue if they can’t host and operate fishing trips; (4) for charter businesses, hotel and restaurant infrastructure may be impacted thus dissuading clients from fishing in the impacted area; (5) fish wholesale dealers lose business; (6) water quality issues impact fish health due to high levels of salinity/HABs in the water.
- If the federal fishery disaster relief funding process is not modernized and streamlined, many fishing businesses and associated small businesses could go out of business before the relief is made available.

**Specifics of the FISHES Act:**

- This bill seeks to expedite the federal fishery disaster relief funding process by enacting a 30-day decision requirement for OMB to deny/approve the State’s spend plan.

To cosponsor the FISHES Act or if you have any additional questions, please contact Chris Ploch at chris.ploch@mail.house.gov.