

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 23, 2015

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Chabot
Chairman
House Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez
Ranking Member
House Committee on Small Business
B-343C Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop, Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Grijalva, and Ranking Member Velázquez:

We are writing to bring your attention to the National Park Service's final General Management Plan (GMP) and Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for Biscayne National Park. The final GMP will close a large portion of the park's waters to all fishing activities and the FMP would bring an end to all commercial fishing activities within park boundaries in at least ten years.

These proposals conflict with the position of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the recommendations of the park's own stakeholder working groups, and thousands of public comments opposed to the implementation of marine reserves in the park.

Florida is the top recreational fishing and boating state in the nation, earning the state the title of "Fishing Capital of the World." Biscayne National Park is an active, urban park with visitors enjoying a host of recreational activities, including fishing and boating—resulting in nearly 10 million angling trips each year. According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida's approximately 2.4 million saltwater anglers annually provide an economic contribution of \$7.6 billion, and over 109,000 jobs. Similarly, the boating industry spends over \$10.3 billion each year, with a substantial portion of that output occurring in South Florida.

South Florida and the Florida Keys comprise the second largest commercial seaport in the Southeastern United States and represent enormous economic value to Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. The FMP and GMP, as written, would have immediate, extensive, and negative socio-economic impacts in the affected area with an estimated loss of more than 500 boat-related jobs and over \$40 million in product revenue with turn-over.

Additionally, the impacts this closure could have on recreational anglers, charter-for-hire operations, commercial fishermen, fish houses, restaurants, marinas, and other small businesses should be taken into account before this GMP and FMP can be implemented.

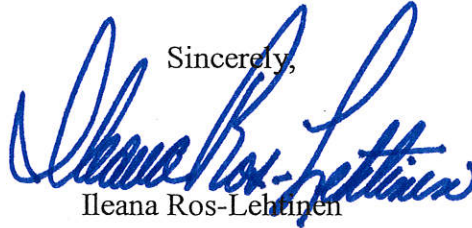
Given the concerns raised by numerous stakeholders, and the critical timeline, we respectfully request the Natural Resources Committee and the Small Business Committee convene an oversight hearing on this issue as soon as possible.

Thank you for your kind attention.



Carlos Curbelo

Sincerely,



Ileana Ros-Lehtinen



Mario Diaz-Balart