

Administration of Barack Obama, 2016

Statement on Signing the Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act
December 16, 2016

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 6452, the "Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act," which implements the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean, and the amendments to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. I recommended that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of all of these treaties because they will help promote sound fishery management; enable us to better combat illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing; and prevent destructive fishing practices and contribute to the long-term conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources on the high seas. I appreciate the efforts of the Congress to ensure that the United States can contribute to these international efforts.

The bill provides that the United States will be represented on the North Pacific Fisheries Commission by five commissioners—two appointed by the President, and the three chairpersons of the North Pacific, Pacific, and Western Pacific Fishery Management Councils, who are selected by the members of those Councils. Because the commissioners have the authority to speak on behalf of the United States before an international body, they are diplomatic officers. The Constitution grants the President the exclusive authority to represent and to decide who else will represent the United States in foreign relations. Allowing the regional fishery management chairpersons to represent the United States on the North Pacific Fisheries Commission would raise constitutional concerns. The executive branch will develop an approach to treat this provision of the statute in a manner that mitigates the constitutional concerns while adhering closely to the intent of the Congress.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
December 16, 2016.

NOTE: H.R. 6452, approved December 16, was assigned Public Law No. 114–327.

Categories: Bill Signings and Vetoes : Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act, signing statement.

Subjects: Environment : Conservation :: Fishery stocks, management efforts; Legislation, enacted : Ensuring Access to Pacific Fisheries Act.

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