

**To: National Desk**

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COLD SPRING HARBOR, N.Y., July 28 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Following is a statement of Carl Safina, president, Blue Ocean Institute, on an overfishing article in the journal Science:

"The U.S. assumed world leadership in oceans policy with the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. That law defines overfishing, requires annual identification of overfished species, and requires fishery managers to end overfishing and rebuild populations within specific timeframes, usually 10 years. The U.S. now uniquely has numerous fishery species for whom overfishing has ended and whose recovery is beginning or even well under way. No other country can make such a claim. Yet federal administration policy change proposals and congressional bills introduced at the behest of the fishing industry would relax or eliminate the law's recovery mandates.

"This would destroy the one tool that is working, and take us backward to serial depletion of ocean fishes in U.S. waters -- exactly the situation that convinced Congress to pass the Sustainable Fisheries Act that the administration and a few congressional members are now targeting.

"People say the 10-year timeframe is 'arbitrary.' Well, it's as arbitrary as the 55 mile an hour speed limit. But imagine no speed limits; you'd get pulled over by a policeman who'd say, 'You were going too fast,' and you'd say, 'I disagree, and what do you mean, 'too fast'?' Without time limits and numerical triggers, we know what happens in fisheries. That prompted the Sustainable Fisheries Act in the first place. And it's why we need clear, reasonable, timetables and mandates that require a rapid end to overfishing and a clear rebuilding timetable. That's what we have now, and that's what the administration and Congress, mainly on behalf of certain sectors of New England's fishing industry, are trying to undermine. Fishery depletion serves the short-term greed of a few; but recovery is good for everyone."