



## **Angler-Backed Billfish Conservation Act Clears U.S. House Natural Resources Committee**

**Washington, D.C. – June 6, 2018** – Conservationists and anglers are commending the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources for advancing [H.R. 4528](#), a bill to amend the Billfish Conservation Act of 2012, sponsored by Congressman Darren Soto (D-Fla.). An identical bill (S. 396) passed the U.S. Senate on October 2, 2017.

“We thank Chairman Rob Bishop and Congressman Soto for bringing this important conservation measure in front of the House Natural Resources Committee,” said Jeff Angers, president of the Center for Sportfishing Policy. “We hope to see final passage by the House very soon so that the federal government can finally implement the law as it was originally intended six years ago.”

The Billfish Conservation Act of 2012 banned the importation of all billfish caught by foreign fleets into the continental United States and, perhaps most importantly, set an example for other countries to pursue similar conservation efforts once thought impossible. However, questions arose over whether the same prohibitions on foreign-caught billfish imposed by the bill also applied to billfish caught commercially in Hawaii. If commercially caught billfish could be transported from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland, it would circumvent the intent of the conservation measure.

H.R. 4528 and S. 396 simply clarify that billfish landed in Hawaii must be retained there. Implemented as originally intended, the law should make it easier for the U.S. to establish a greater leadership role for the international protection of billfish.

“Today’s action by the Natural Resources Committee brings us one step closer to properly protecting billfish under the original intent of the law and standing tall

as conservation leaders,” said Nehl Horton, president of the International Game Fish Association. “It has been a long road since 2012, but I am hopeful the U.S. House will do the right thing and swiftly pass H.R. 4528.”

The coalition of groups supporting the Billfish Conservation Act includes [American Sportfishing Association](#), [Center for Sportfishing Policy](#), [Coastal Conservation Association](#), [Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation](#), [Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation](#), [International Game Fish Association](#), [National Marine Manufacturers Association](#), [OCEARCH](#), [The Billfish Foundation](#) and [Wild Oceans](#).