

## Summary of President Trump's veto statement vs the facts

**Veto Statement:** Alternative gear for large mesh drift gillnets “has not been proven to be an economically viable substitute.”

**The Facts:** Swordfish caught using deep-set buoy gear can earn nearly double the price of that caught using large mesh drift gillnets since the gear is actively tended and results in fresher, higher quality fish. According to the Pacific Fisheries Information Network, boats using large mesh drift gillnets last year caught only 19.8 metric tons of swordfish which sold for an average of \$3.62 per pound, while boats using deep-set buoy gear caught 79.4 metric tons of swordfish which sold for an average of \$5.88 per lb.

**Veto Statement:** “An estimated 30 fishing vessels will no longer be able to fish.”

**The Facts:** The bill provides for a buyout program to compensate for retiring large mesh drift gillnets and provide additional financial support to switch to alternative gear. In California state waters, more than 90 percent of commercial fishermen are already voluntarily participating or have declared they will participate in the state's buyback program.

**Veto Statement:** *The Driftnet Modernization and Bycatch Reduction Act* “will not achieve its purported conservation benefits.”

**The Facts:** Unlike large mesh drift gillnets, deep-set buoy gear is actively monitored so all non-target species caught with it are released alive. Additionally, up to 98 percent of animals caught with deep-set buoys are actually swordfish or other marketable catch, resulting in far less bycatch than large mesh drift gillnets, which averages a 50 percent catch rate of target species. Large mesh drift gillnets entangle at least 60 other species of fish, marine mammals and birds, including endangered species. The nets account for 90 percent of dolphin and porpoises killed along the West Coast and Alaska.

**Veto Statement:** “Without this fishery, Americans will import more swordfish and other species from foreign sources that frequently have more bycatch than our own fisheries.”

**The Facts:** The deep-set buoy gear fishery has the potential to produce a significant amount of swordfish, lessening the reliance on imported swordfish. Last year, vessels fishing with deep set buoy gear landed four times more swordfish than vessels fishing with large mesh drift gillnets

Congress has also enacted provisions in the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* and *Magnuson-Stevens Act* to restrict imports of foreign seafood that doesn't meet U.S. bycatch standards. Therefore, the U.S. should lead on minimizing bycatch to the greatest extent possible in order to hold international fisheries to the same standards.

**Veto Statement:** “For the sake of American fishermen nationwide, I will not let the Congress circumvent the fisheries management process by effectively terminating a fishery without appropriate consultation and input from fishery management councils.”

**The Facts:** Fishery management councils have been consulted in preparing this bill and they support alternative, sustainable gear types.

In 2015, the Pacific Fishery Management Council voted unanimously to enact strict limits on the bycatch of sea turtles and marine mammals and require on-board bycatch monitoring all boats using large mesh drift gillnets. However, the Trump administration withdrew this rule proposed in 2017 but it was overturned by a federal court the following year.

In 2019, after robust scientific and economic analysis, the Pacific Fishery Management Council voted unanimously to approve the authorization of deep-set buoy gear, giving priority for new permits to former large mesh drift gillnet fishermen that voluntarily stop drift gillnetting. The National Marine Fisheries Service is currently working to add this gear to the West Coast Highly Migratory Species Fishery Management Plan, which guides federal management of the swordfish fishery.