



2/25/2024

Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

Re: Senate Bill 1053/House Bill 1238 – Fisheries – Striped Bass – Closed Seasons

Position: **Unfavorable**

Dear Committee Members,

I am a licensed charter captain and Maryland fishing guide operating my charter fishing business, Chasing Light Charters LLC, in the state of Maryland. I specialize in a form of fishing known collectively as Light Tackle Fishing. My business relies heavily on access to fishing for striped bass on the Chesapeake Bay. Winter and early spring catch and release fishing provides crucial economic support to my business, as well as to many other boating and fishing businesses in Maryland. As a light tackle guide, I am both a practitioner and teacher in educating my clients to implement safe and ethical catch and release techniques. Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) studies show that catch and release fishing under winter and early spring conditions, while using light tackle fishing gear, leads to less than 3% mortality of striped bass after they are released.

I do not support the proposed changes put forth in SB 1053 because striped bass management should remain under DNR's science-based and stakeholder driven management system. DNR's ongoing approach to striped bass management has already brought about key regulations such as the dynamic closing and opening of fishing areas, prohibiting the targeting of striped bass in spawning areas and in areas where fish are staging to prepare to spawn, regulating the type of fishing gear used, and permitting catch and release of striped bass only in areas where these fish are migrating. DNR's science-based approach continues to evolve and its existing measures already exceed those measures required by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission coast wide management plan.

Maryland should continue to follow DNR's lead in the management of striped bass and not force DNR to enact new regulations which have not been vetted by DNR fisheries science. I believe that SB 1053 will severely impact fishing businesses that rely on catch and release, but without any measurable improvements to striped bass conservation.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask you to give this bill an **UNFAVORABLE** rating.

Sincerely,

Captain Lawrence Geipe  
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