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## Sport Fishing Charters

02/24/2024

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 charter captain and sales representative for Judge Yachts, a boat builder located on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. My business relies heavily on access to fishing for striped bass, which is our state fish. Access to fishing is far more important than the number or size of fish my party can harvest. I ask that you **oppose the bill** that would prevent catch and release fishing for 2.5 months given the following reasons:

- There are no measurable mortality savings with the proposed season closure
- The closure does not speed up the striped bass stock recovery
- We have already lost 53 days of economic opportunity since 2020 with no shown benefit
- Spawning areas are already closed to targeting striped bass and have been since 1990

Regulations such as this belong with our Department of Natural Resources, who already has a process for managing the species that involves public input with the best science available. DNR is then able to ensure compliance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, who is tasked with managing the species up and down the coast. This is not an issue for the legislature to manage and it only stands to make the management more political than science-based.

Again, I ask you to give this bill an **UNFAVORABLE** rating and allow the Department of Natural Resources to manage through their appropriate processes.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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