

**Testimony in Opposition to SJ6
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – Atlantic Menhaden – Population
Evaluation and Prohibition on Commercial Reduction Fishing
March 10, 2021**

To: Hon. Paul Pinsky, Chair and members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Michael Wilson, Executive Assistant to the President
United Food and Commercial Workers Union, Local 400

Chair Pinsky and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. I am here today on behalf of the members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), Local 400. We represent over 10,000 members in Maryland working on the front lines of the ongoing pandemic in grocery, retail, food distribution, law enforcement, and health care.

In addition to our members in Maryland, we represent an additional 20,000 working people in the Mid-Atlantic region including over 10,000 in neighboring Virginia. Our members in Virginia include close to one hundred who support themselves, their families, and their communities on Virginia's Northern Neck by fishing for menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay and the coastal waters of the Atlantic.

UFCW Local 400 strongly opposes SJ 6 because it is unnecessary and calls on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to take action that would not be based on science or best practices in fisheries management.

The ASMFC already evaluates and studies the menhaden population on a regular basis. On their website (<http://www.asmfc.org/species/atlantic-menhaden>) you can view the most recent Atlantic Menhaden Single-Species and Ecological Reference Point Assessments and Peer Review Reports form February 2020, which show that “the stock is not overfished”. There is a stock assessment update already scheduled for 2022.

The ASMFC has for decades effectively managed this fishery while taking input from various stakeholders and following the best available science. There is no need for Maryland to request further studies beyond what these experts are already doing.

In addition, requesting that the ASMFC consider prohibiting commercial fishing of menhaden in the Bay shows that this resolution already has a conclusion in mind that is not based on science or best practices. Unfortunately, we have seen before that sport fishing and other interest groups want to ban menhaden fishing in the bay for their own benefit, regardless of the science or the best interest of the fishery.

This resolution is unnecessary, undermines the good work of the ASMFC experts, and attempts to force conclusions that are not based on science. **For these reasons we oppose SJ6 and ask for an unfavorable report.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.