

FISH THE BAY CHARTERS, LLC
Captain Phil Langley
50126 Dove Cove Road – Dameron, Maryland 20628

March 08, 2020

REF: Senate Joint Resolution 6 – Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – Atlantic Menhaden – Population Evaluation and Prohibition on Commercial Reduction Fishing

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members,

I am writing to convey my support of an evaluation of the population of Atlantic menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. Over the years we have seen drastic declines in many of the Chesapeake Bay's iconic species, e.g. - striped bass, flounder, weakfish, bluefish, and shad. While resource sustainability is the primary focus of my support, I must also note the huge economic impact for recreational and commercial fisheries in our state, as relate to the Chesapeake Bay. As a charter captain, along with many other charter captains, commercial fishermen, and recreational businesses in Maryland, I depend upon a sustainable fishery.

At this time, we do not have specific science based data that identifies the volume of menhaden required to support a healthy Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Ecological reference points were recently introduced for the coast-wide fishery of menhaden, however Chesapeake Bay ecological reference have not yet been developed. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has identified studies of menhaden within the Chesapeake Bay as a priority and is exploring sources to fund needed research. But these kinds of studies – to estimate abundance of a migratory species within a water body like the Chesapeake - are very expensive and cannot be done particularly quickly; often, multiple years of data are needed.

I strongly support the urgency to develop ecological reference points for the Chesapeake Bay. Without this data, we are lacking the science based approach to identify the volume of menhaden necessary to support the many species of marine life that are dependent upon the menhaden fishery. I believe we have the technology to support ecological reference points in the Bay. However, I also believe funding and priority are what we need to focus on to identify at what level the menhaden fishery should be managed.

Please feel free to contact me should you like to discuss in greater detail. I can be reached via email – captphillangley@gmail.com or phone – 301-904-0935.

Respectfully,

Captain Phil Langley
301-904-0935