



February 26, 2024

**Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401**

RE: SB1053 / HB1238 – Fisheries – Striped Bass – Closed Season

Position: UNFAVORABLE

Dear Senator Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am the owner/guide/Captain of a light tackle fishing charter operating on the Chesapeake Bay. I vehemently oppose this bill as it will directly impact me and my fellow guides, local tackle shops and manufacturers, and other related businesses. In addition, it will limit public access to a world class Striped Bass fishery. My business operates by providing a fishing experience, and access to the fishery is at the utmost importance. Please consider the following information while reviewing this bill:

- **Spawning tributaries and areas already closed starting March 1**
- **"No-Target" closures have no measurable impact on mortality savings**
- **We have already had 2 seasons of April no-target closures that have impacted business but had no apparent positive impact on spawning success**
- **The Striped Bass that are being caught and released are feeding in the open water of the bay and are not spawning or staging to**



spawn, nor are they "pregnant" which is a common misnomer. Fertilization of the eggs happens outside of the body in the spawning areas at the heads of major tributaries.

While I could continue, these are primary points to consider. Furthermore, this bill is at its root a Fisheries management measure which should be left to the Fisheries managers and biologists of the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Management decisions should not be decided by politics or policy but by science.

Therefore, I ask that you please give this bill an UNFAVORABLE rating and allow Fisheries managers to regulate as necessary through the appropriate processes.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Brandon Wingate", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Capt. Brandon Wingate
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