



March 6, 2026

## Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 755 Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee. I am Joe Gaskins, Co-chairman of the MBCP

The Maryland Business & Clergy Partnership (MBPC) is a statewide partnership between over 10,000 businesses and 1500 members of the clergy located in the state of Maryland. The MBCP is a nonpartisan organization with a mission to bridge the gaps between businesses, churches, elected officials, government and community. Our goal is to make a difference throughout the State of Maryland by changing the economic climate through political influence and advocacy, and to open doors for all.

It is no surprise that MBCP is an adamant supporter of Senate Bill 755 which was introduced in response to serious concerns raised by stakeholders regarding regulations being considered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources affecting striped bass. These concerns center the long-term sustainability of the striped bass population, and the significant economic impact current regulatory decisions are having on Maryland's fishing and tourism industries.

SB 755 seeks to address this concern by prohibiting the Maryland Department of Natural Resources from establishing a recreational catch-and-release season for striped bass between March 1 and April 30. This period coincides with the spawning season in the Chesapeake Bay, when the species is most vulnerable. Targeting striped bass during key spawning periods in the Chesapeake Bay raises legitimate concerns about whether we are protecting the species during one of the most critical phases of its life cycle. This bill provides clear statutory direction for recreational and charter boat summer and fall seasons by establishing consistent guidelines for anglers while maintaining reasonable conservation limits.

The economic consequences facing Maryland's charter fishing industry has been devastating to the state of Maryland. Fishing enthusiasts have abandoned the state as a choice for recreational fishing. A one fish limit is the 'straw that broke the camels back'. Other states such as Delaware, Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina & Florida have become the alternative locations. ***The juice isn't worth the squeeze in Maryland.***

The regulations affecting striped bass have already had a destructive impact on charter boat operators, recreational anglers, tourism, and local businesses—particularly in Eastern Shore and Southern Maryland communities where the fishing economy supports countless families and small businesses. In other counties rock fish has disappeared from the menu...devastating!

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