



Talbot Watermen Association, Inc.

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March 6, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Talbot Watermen Association appreciates the opportunity to testify in **support with amendments** on **Senate Bill 755 – Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations**.


According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland striped bass populations have experienced poor spawning success for seven years in a row. Biologists, fisheries management experts, and commercial industry members have also noted shifts in the migration and spawning patterns of Maryland's striped bass. These shifts are likely driven by changing weather patterns, water quality, invasive species, and habitat loss. Populations are further pressured by allowing fish to be targeted during spawning season and by allowing certain catch and release methods that cause fish mortality. In 2017, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission estimated that up to 90% of striped bass dead discard was attributable to catch and release equating to over 6.35 million fish. A recent study (December 2025) by the University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Natural Sciences found that fish out of the water for 120 seconds never fully recovered. The study further noted that "the bigger the fish, the greater toll of being hooked, landed, and released" and "reducing angler impacts on big fish, particularly females, is critical to the future of the population."

At the same time, we acknowledge that commercial fishing, charter boat fishing, and recreational fishing are strong contributors to Maryland's economy and are an important part of our heritage.

This underscores the importance of Maryland enacting regulations that balance the environmental and economic interests of our state. It is also imperative that those regulations appropriately and proportionally address the impact that each sector and each action have on striped bass populations. With the proposed amendments, Senate Bill 755 strikes that balance.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and respectfully request that the committee adopt the amendments and issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 755.

Sincerely,


Herman Jeffrey Harrison
President

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