

SB0755 Unfavorable Sean Beck

Catch and Release Restrictions

According to MD DNR's 2022 report on recreational fishing ([https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DNR/SB455Ch409HB601Ch410\(2\)\(2022\).pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/DNR/SB455Ch409HB601Ch410(2)(2022).pdf)), in 2020 "706,700 anglers spent \$487,500,000 while fishing in Maryland, generating \$765.3M in economic impact... Maryland received nearly \$4 million in Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration funds for fisheries management and research, generated through the sales of sport fishing equipment and the portion of federal excise taxes attributable to motorboat fuels. In Maryland, the total revenues generated for fisheries management through sport fishing activities in FY21 were \$34,743,302, broken down as: 44% Special Fund, 12% Federal Fund, 23% General Fund, and 21% Reimbursable Fund." While striped bass fishing certainly does not account for all of this revenue, as Maryland's most popular sport fish it absolutely accounts for a significant portion of this spending. MD DNR does not currently have the ability to track C&R angling compared to direct harvest, but many anglers, including myself and my many angling friends, exclusively fish for striped bass using catch-and-release methods. **This bill will negatively impact MD DNR funding by restricting catch-and-release fishing for striped bass.**

Summer Season

In 2020 MD DNR introduced summer restrictions on fishing for striped bass to prevent post-release mortality of fish due to high water temperatures and low levels of dissolved oxygen. The suggested season in this bill ignores this by allowing fishing throughout the entirety of the summer. MD DNR as regulated by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission implements slot sizes for striped bass that can be kept. While fishing an angler cannot explicitly control the size of fish that decides to eat his or her bait. This results in throwback of either oversized or undersized fish which during the summer season means a high mortality rate for stripers. **This bill will negatively impact the striped bass population by allowing fishing during the high mortality summer season.**

Trophy Season

Striped bass are a coastal resource, not just a Maryland resource, and their spawning success is in part governed by the available biomass of spawning-class females. By

allowing for a Spring trophy season harvest of spawning-class striped bass we not only negatively impact the species by removing critical spawners but we also negatively economically impact the resource for the entirety of the coast. Spawning-class fish are already heavily impacted by the commercial fishery, and adding in recreational harvest of spawners will further harm the species. **This bill will negatively impact the striped bass population's future by allowing further removal of spawning-class fish.**

For all of these reasons I urge the committee to have an unfavorable report on this bill.