

**Date:** 3/10/2026

**To:** Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Re: Support with Amendments — Senate Bill 559 – Recreational Striped Bass Catch Reporting**

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and other recreational fishing stakeholders, we offer **support for Senate Bill 559 if amended**.

We are deeply committed to **improving recreational fisheries data collection** and have long advised Maryland DNR and other regional and federal agencies to develop better tools to understand both angler activity and the health of our fisheries resources.

As participants in Maryland's **Recreational Fisheries Data Task Force (2022)**, and with broad experience supporting improvements to recreational fisheries management in other states and regions, we remain committed to working with state officials to implement meaningful and effective survey systems and regulations.

Instead of mandating a census of striped bass catch, we encourage the following considerations:

- **Leverage existing authority at DNR** to develop and implement focused recreational angler surveys and data collection systems.
- **Ensure alignment with ongoing federal changes** to recreational fishing survey approaches as improvements to national and regional programs continue to evolve.
- Recognize that the **Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP)**—a federal and state partnership administered by NOAA—has often fallen short of meeting stakeholder expectations for timely and precise fisheries data, particularly at the Chesapeake Bay scale.
- Support **state-focused and regionally coordinated survey systems** designed by fisheries professionals in the Chesapeake Bay region.
- Prioritize improved data collection for **key Chesapeake Bay recreational fisheries**, including striped bass, cobia, and red drum.
- Utilize existing data collection partnerships and structures to ensure the usability of any data collected in fisheries conservation and management programs.

We appreciate efforts to improve recreational fisheries data and stand ready to work with the Department and the General Assembly to shape this legislation so that it supports effective, science-based fisheries management.

Sincerely,

David Sikorski, Coastal Conservation  
Association Maryland & Rec. Data Task Force  
Chair

Mike Waine, American Sportfishing Association

Brett Fitzgerald, Angler Action Foundation