

Calvert Cliffs Fish Kill.pdf

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OUTDOORS

Dozens Of Dead Fish, Crabs And Birds Wash Ashore At Calvert Cliffs State Park In “Nexus Event”

by Carrie Cabral
March 5, 2026



Source: Patrick Flaherty

LUSBY, Md. — In mid- to late February, a local hiker found dozens of dead fish and birds washed ashore on the beach of Calvert Cliffs State Park.

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Patrick Flaherty, a Lusby resident and 2026 Board of County Commissioners candidate, said he's hiked in Calvert Cliffs almost every day for the last 15 years. He's never seen anything like this before.

On Feb. 11, 13 and 23, Flaherty documented dozens of dead animals washed ashore. The 23rd brought the largest and most concerning event — Flaherty documented 96 deceased rockfish, toadfish and crabs, as well as eight to 10 sea ducks and several seagulls washed up along the beach in the area between the Cove Point LNG property line to the cliffs bordering the Calvert Cliffs Clean Energy Center, owned by energy company Constellation. Flaherty immediately contacted the [Maryland Department of the Environment](#) (MDE), which sent out an investigator.



“Sometimes in the summer, you see some dead fish on the beach,” Fla Ad ends in 15
never.”

Officials at Calvert Cliffs Clean Energy Center said they hadn't made any similar observations on their property, nor witnessed any unusual events.

"If any such discoveries are made in the future, we will immediately report them to MDE," a representative for Calvert Cliffs said in an email to The BayNet.

The MDE investigator, Chris Lockett, agreed that winter die-offs of fish are rare. In this case, he attributed the deaths of multiple species to a "nexus" event — or a combination of factors that led to the deaths rather than a single incident. The birds, he said, may indicate some kind of disease. Blue crabs, on the other hand, do occasionally experience winter die-offs. It's not common, but has been documented in cold winters. Crabs spend their winters dug into the sediment in the bay — those who chose to do this in shallow waters are more vulnerable.



Source: Patrick Flaherty



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The fish deaths were where Lockett's investigation took an unusual turn. Lockett, who has personally worked on more than 500 fish death events, said he also looked for injuries that could indicate that fish were caught in

trawls. Finding neither, Lockett moved on to water quality issues. He took water samples for oxygen levels, algae blooms and pollution.

The most likely scenario, Lockett said, was that fish suffered from temperature stress related to catch-and-release fishing. He said that the water temperatures vary in certain spots in the bay. On a few key warm days in February, people took to the water for recreational fishing. During that process, they released fish into colder waters than the ones in which they were caught. A sudden temperature change, even of just a few degrees, can be a huge shock to the fish's system.

“A lot of times, you walk down to the scene of something like that, and you see they're all dead. And the simplest explanation is that they're all related, but when you investigate you come to understand it's not the case. We can say now that it's scientifically correct to say they're not connected events,” Lockett said.

Lockett is confident in his findings about the fish kill event. The waterfowl death event is being investigated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

“This is how it gets done at MDE,” Lockett said. “It's based on strong science and evaluating the evidence to come to a conclusion.”

However, Flaherty still expressed concern about the environmental impact of developing the area, especially given the ongoing discussion about adding a data center to Lusby.

The MDE typically doesn't release public reports on its investigations. Each year, fish kill events are documented in an annual report. This event would be included in the 2027 report. If the event was related to a compliance issue or a company, or someone was directly responsible, the event would be documented differently. Still, public reports aren't something people typically request.

“People like Mr. Flaherty are important to MDE,” said Jay Apperson, deputy director of communications at MDE. “We always advise people to report things to us. We want to know, and we'll look into it.”



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DNR Study February 17 2026.pdf

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Page 4 DNR biologist emphasized protection of spawning stock

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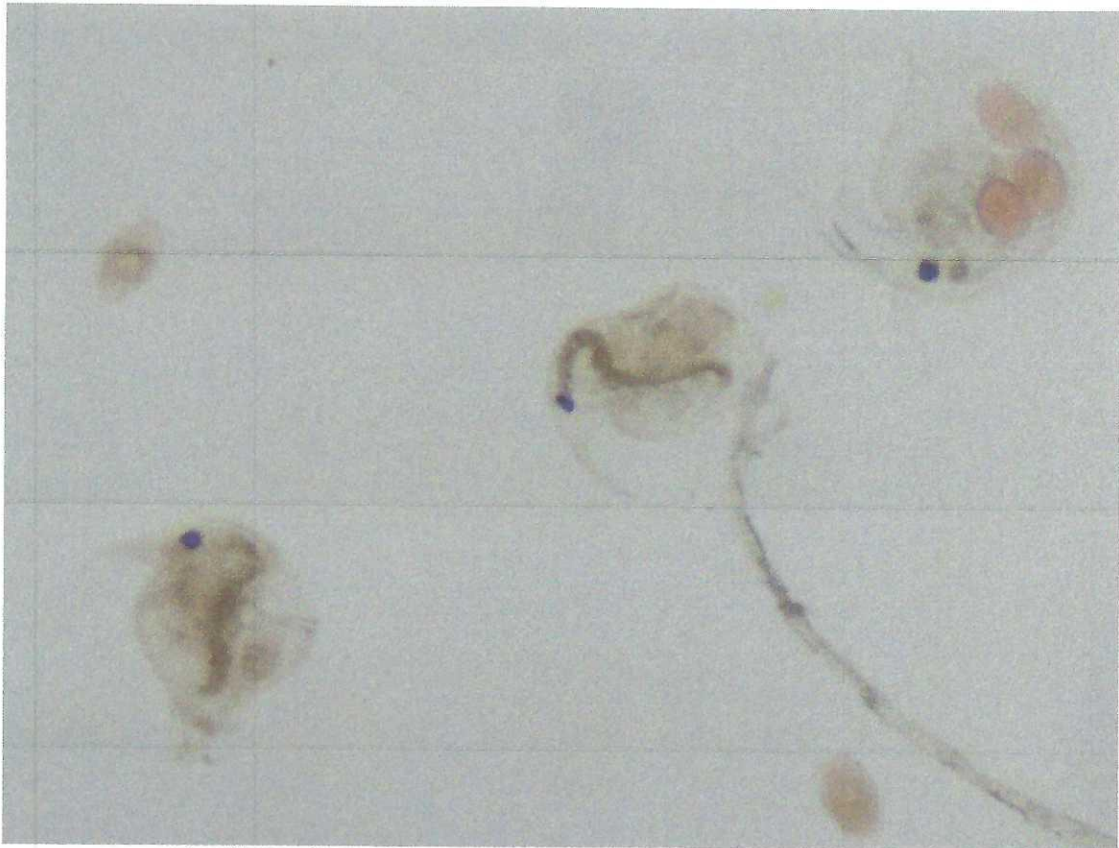
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Striped Bass Spawning Success Not Limited by Zooplankton, DNR Study Suggests

February 17, 2026

Larval striped bass appeared to have enough to eat in 2023 and 2024



Cladocerans, or water fleas, from the stomach contents of a larval striped bass, viewed under a microscope. Shannon Moorhead/DNR

The availability of tiny plankton that larval striped bass eat during their first weeks of life does not appear to be a leading factor for the recent poor spawning success of the fish in Maryland, according to a new study by scientists at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

The findings suggest that one leading theory about the poor spawning success of striped bass—that larval striped bass have missed important blooms of zooplankton to feed on—is not to blame for the consecutive years of low numbers of juvenile striped bass in the Chesapeake Bay since 2019.

The study, [published late December](#) in the journal *Marine and Coastal Fisheries*, analyzed stomach contents of weeks-old striped bass in the Choptank River from 2023 and 2024 and compared them to historical data on larval striped bass diets in the Choptank in the 1980s. While these two recent years had poor year classes, meaning spawning female striped bass produced low number of juveniles in those years, the 1980s dataset included a full range of year-class outcomes.

They found that the young striped bass had enough to eat in 2023 and 2024, with plankton buffets available at similar levels to high spawning years.

“When we got done, basically a strong year class like the one in the Choptank River in 1989 didn’t really look different from 2023 or 2024 in terms of feeding,” DNR fisheries biologist Jim Uphoff, the lead author of the study, said. DNR biologists Shannon Moorhead, Alexis Park, Carrie Hoover, Marisa Ponte, and Jeffrey Horne were also authors on the study.

Previously, scientists had wondered if a “mismatch” of the timing of zooplankton blooms and larval striped bass looking for their first meal could be a major cause of recent low year-class success. By largely ruling out that “match-mismatch hypothesis” as a leading driver of recent poor spawning success, the study helps biologists home in on the most likely reason for the low recruitment.

To collect the feeding data on the larval striped bass, the biologists pulled a large plankton net through several sites on the Choptank River in the weeks after known striped bass spawning. Bringing jars of preserved river water collected from the nets back to the lab, they sifted through a layer of fine organic matter in pans to find the larval striped bass and white perch, only between 5 and 10 millimeters long. The two species share a nursery, eat the same zooplankton, and closely resemble each other, requiring individual identification under a microscope.



Maryland Department of Natural Resources biologist Marisa Ponte deploys a plankton net in the Choptank River. Joe Zimmermann/DNR

The DNR team used dissecting needles and microscopes to analyze the stomach contents of the larval fish. They also digitized historical data from larval surveys on the Choptank River in the 1980s.

After hatching, larval striped bass first consume their yolk sac and then find their first meal in the zooplankton that swim in the water column. They mainly eat copepods (microscopic, antennae crustaceans that inspired the Plankton character in “SpongeBob SquarePants”) or cladocerans, commonly called water fleas.

They found that striped bass larvae had a high amount of copepods to eat in 2023 and 2024, as well as a lot of cladocerans in 2024. White perch followed similar patterns.

Plankton feeding levels were variable in the years of the 1980s, but the study found feeding was not closely correlated with the results of the juvenile index from the [young-of-year survey](#), DNR’s longstanding survey used to measure the year class success of striped bass and other Bay fish.

Years with large amounts of juveniles, like 1989, had similar availability of zooplankton to years with poor recruitment, like 2024. Uphoff said successful year classes appear to thrive based on an adequate amount of zooplankton coinciding with several other factors that hit in their favor. Moorhead [recorded a presentation on the findings](#) from the research for the American Fisheries Society meeting last year.

The study also found that the abundance of striped bass larvae sized 8-10 millimeters matched up closely to the abundance found in the older juveniles of the young-of-year survey, suggesting that the success of the year class was already largely determined before the fish's third week of life, when they are smaller than a grain of rice.

Uphoff described the spawning strategy of striped bass as a gambler's bet—with a slight increase in temperature, they go all in. "In enough cases, the timing is bad, and that doesn't work," he said. "But every once in a while, they have a big year class." With a shortened spawning season, it may be harder to hit it right.

"The amount of eggs is okay and the feeding larvae are okay, so now you're looking at something in between," Uphoff said. "The big drivers are water flow and temperature. More and more, it's looking like a temperature issue here, related to climate change. By process of elimination, that's the next place to look."

A previous study authored by Uphoff found that the [presence of striped bass eggs in spawning areas in recent years appears to be high enough](#) to support good recruitment. Another study, by DNR biologist Angela Giuliano, found that [the striped bass spawning season is shortening](#) as early spring water temperatures are rising in the Bay.

By seeming to rule out the early feeding period as a deciding factor for year-class success, this recent zooplankton study suggests that the shortened spawning period is when striped bass are struggling.

"This study is another important contribution to striped bass research by our fisheries biologists at the Maryland Department of Natural Resources," said DNR Assistant Secretary of Aquatic Resources Kate Charbonneau. "Our scientists have brought us another step closer to understanding the ongoing low juvenile recruitment of striped bass. DNR is a science-based agency, and research like this is important for guiding our management decisions."

DNR biologists have emphasized the need to enforce protective regulations for adult striped bass in order to maintain a healthy breeding population. When the environmental conditions are right, a good stock of spawners could bring a large year class into the Chesapeake.

By Joe Zimmermann, science writer with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources

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DNR Study Protecting Female Spawning Fish.pdf

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This study was completed by MD DNR marine biologist
It is listed on their website and recommends protecting
large female spawning fish

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DNR Biologists' Study: Older, Larger Female Striped Bass Produce Far More Eggs

April 25, 2024

A new study looks at the age at which female striped bass mature and how many eggs they produce as they age

Two of the most important traits to understand fish population growth are the age at which females mature and their fecundity, or how many eggs they can produce at each age on average.

A new study from biologists in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has helped to update information on those factors in striped bass, making available current biological information about the population for use in the stock assessment model, which estimates the numbers and biomass of mature females in the Atlantic coast striped bass stock.

The study, published in *Marine and Coastal Fisheries: Dynamics, Management, and Ecosystem Science* in February, determined that half of females reach sexual maturity between ages 5 and 6, and larger, older females produce more eggs per kilogram body mass than smaller, younger females.



Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologists survey for striped bass in 2018. Photo by Stephen Badger, Maryland DNR.

“This research demonstrates the importance of protecting the female breeding stock of striped bass, both throughout their life cycle and particularly when they are at large, productive sizes,” said Lynn Fegley, director of the department’s Fishing and Boating Services. “By protecting large female striped bass, we can help make sure they produce a lot of eggs that will survive better when the environmental conditions are right for successful spawning.”

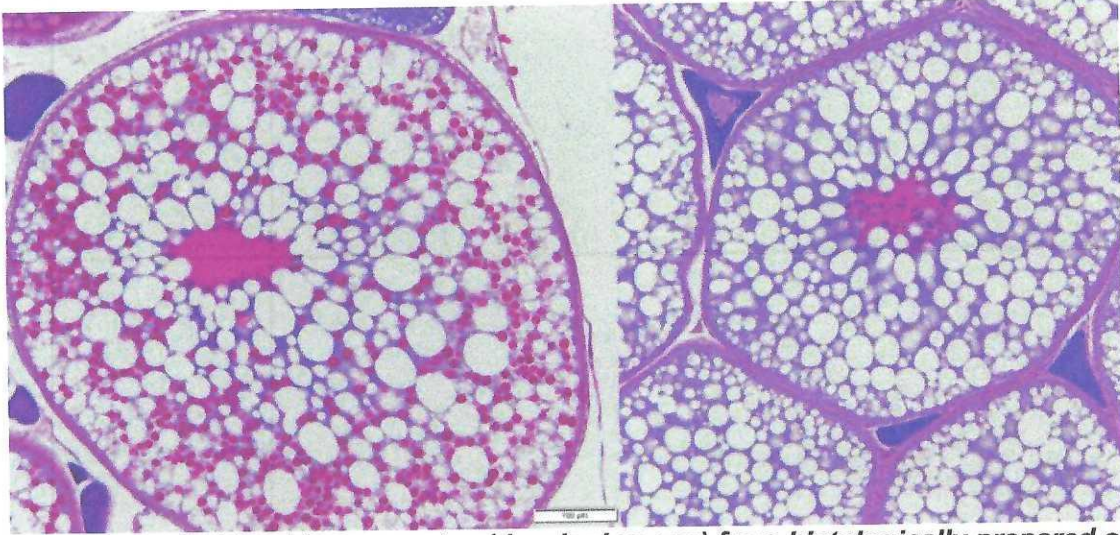
This study sought to use updated methods to define maturity and explore whether weight and fecundity were proportional when estimating the size of the striped bass spawning stock.

Three Maryland Department of Natural Resources biologists—Simon Brown, Angela Giuliano, and Beth Versak—examined the microscopic anatomy of striped bass ovaries to better understand specific aspects of the reproductive biology of female Atlantic striped bass.

The biologists used the latest standards in applying histology—the microscopic study of tissues—to identify maturity in fish, standards which have progressed since the last time the female age-at-maturity schedule used previously in the assessment was calculated. They then analyzed striped bass ovaries to distinguish between immature, maturing and functionally mature developmental stages.

Through collaboration with multiple state and federal agencies, surveyors collected a wide range of samples throughout the fall and the entire spring spawning season in the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coast, accounting for all developmental stages.

Scientists at the Oxford Cooperative Laboratory then stained cross sections of striped bass ovaries with special dyes, encased them in paraffin wax, and mounted thin slices on a glass slide. The dye highlights different components of the developing eggs, allowing biologists to determine if a striped bass could produce fully developed eggs by the spawning season, or had just recently spawned.



Close-up images of striped bass oocytes (developing egg) from histologically prepared ovarian tissue samples collected during the spawning season. From left to right: an oocyte from a functionally mature individual containing numerous vitellogenin-derived yolk protein granules (red dots) and an oocyte from a maturing individual that will not spawn this season. The transparent sponge-like areas of the oocyte are the neutral lipids that aid in egg buoyancy as striped bass eggs float in the water column until hatching.

The authors found that some younger females produced enlarged oocytes (developing eggs) that appeared developed but lacked the critical yolk material. These were determined to be fish that had begun maturing, and go through a “practice” reproductive cycle, but hadn’t yet become fully mature adults capable of reproducing. As water temperatures rise in June, the unspawned, unreleased eggs are reabsorbed in a process called atresia. The resulting analysis showed that just a small percentage of females reach maturity by age 4, but about 90% do by age 7.

The female age-at-maturity schedule is used in the stock assessment to calculate spawning stock biomass but was previously estimated during the 1980s when the stock was considered collapsed. This study determined the female age and length at 50% maturity in Atlantic striped bass based on spring samples were around ages 5 and 6 and 24 inches long. The updated maturity schedule was used in the last benchmark [stock assessment for striped bass](#).

The researchers determined fecundity by taking a photo of small samples of mature striped bass eggs, using a computer algorithm to count the eggs in the photos, and conducting further calculations to come up with an estimate of the total numbers of eggs found in a ripe striped bass ovary.

The number of eggs produced by a female striped bass ranged up to 4 million in a 13-year-old fish, but eggs also increased disproportionately with body weight. This means, for example, that in one spawning season, a 30-pound striped bass will produce more eggs than two 15-pound striped bass combined.

“Detailed information on the reproductive life history traits that translate female striped bass biomass into reproductive capacity is crucial for informing future management of the stock,” Brown, fisheries biologist and study co-author, said.

While the authors noted methodological and interpretive differences between this study and others ranging over the past decades, the resulting calculations of age at 50% maturity and fecundity were consistent with previous findings. Given that environmental and fishing pressure on spawning striped bass has been variable over the last four decades, this study concludes that reproductive-related life history traits of female Atlantic striped bass are robust to long-term changes.

This research contributes to the department's effort to understand the [spawning challenges striped bass face in the Chesapeake Bay](#) and use the latest science to inform management.

Fisheries managers monitor a variety of factors that influence striped bass recruitment. Environmental conditions, including warm winters and low water flows, [have been unfavorable for striped bass recruitment](#) and are considered to be factors behind recent decreased reproductive success. After five consecutive years of below-average spawning success in Maryland's four major spawning rivers, as well as the stock assessment indicating an overfished status of the Atlantic striped bass stock, Maryland and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission have approved [management actions](#) aimed at protecting the spawning stock and reducing fishing mortality in 2024.

By Sinclair Boggs, Marketing Strategist with Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fishing and Boating Services

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Kentmorr Marina Testimony.pdf

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910 Kentmorr Road, Stevensville, MD 21666 • 410.643.0029 tel • 410.643.1593 fax

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Feldman,

The purpose of my note is twofold. Firstly, to say thank you for your efforts in Senate Bill 0755. I am the owner of Kentmorr Marina & Restaurant (Stevensville, MD) and we need your assistance desperately in the passing of this emergency legislation.

Secondly, I want to share with you the devastating economic impact has made on Marina/Restaurants on Chesapeake Bay. Kentmorr Marina caters to the services of the Maryland Charter Boat Association. Our Charter Boat membership (21 Charter Boats) is one of the largest on Chesapeake Bay roughly 20% of all the fishing trips.

The Charter Boat industry's Electronic Facts Reporting System (that is required reporting by every Charter Boat) had reported 80,000 fishermen in 2023. Because of the DNR Regulations and Management decisions that have been made to the Maryland Charter Boat Industry, this fisherman number in 2024 was reduced to 48,000, then again reduced to 46,000 in 2025.

Listed below is how these decisions have affected my business:

- 1) Restaurant sales. My restaurant tenant had a 10-year lease and terminated their lease after two years because of the reduction of the fisherman that came to eat before or after their charter. 52% of the fisherman that come to Kentmorr Marina to go out fishing with

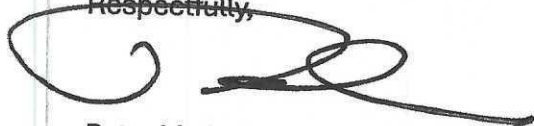
our Charter Boat Fleet will come to eat at our restaurant. The fisherman reduction in 2024 was 16,640 fisherman and 52% of the fisherman reduction in 2025 was 17680 fishermen. If we translate those numbers to actual revenue – and average bill for our meal we use \$ 33.70 (not including tip). This calculates to a financial revenue reduction in 2024 was \$560, 768 and in 2025 it was \$595, 816 (\$1,156, 584 total losses in two years).

- 2) Loss of income to bartenders and wait staff in the two-year period using a 17.5% tip charge \$202, 402
- 3) Loss in Fuel sales – 10, 100 trips in 2023. Went down to 6500 trips in 2024 and 2025 (6500 x 2 = 13,000 trips) - 35 gallons of fuel x 13,000 trips = 455,000 reduced gallons – profit per gallon is 36.5 Cents x 455,000 = \$166,075 revenue loss

Total Loss in a two-year period of Chesapeake Bay Marina/Restaurants = \$1,525061.00 . 20% of this number is what Kentmorr Marina/Restaurant lost - \$305,012.

Please Senator, if I can help in any way, please call me (240-687-3080).

Respectfully,



Peter McArdle

Managing Partner (21 years as the owner operator)

KENTMORR MARINA PROPERTIES, LLC (Marina and Restaurant)

910 Kentmorr Road

Stevensville, MD 21666

Maryland Charter Boat Association Writtem Testimon

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Maryland Charter Boat Association
Written Testimony in Support
Senate Bill 755

Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

March 3, 2026

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

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Charter Boat Association, we respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 755.

Over the past two years, Maryland's charter fishing industry has experienced severe economic hardship as a result of striped bass regulations that have disproportionately impacted the Charter Boats-for-Hire sector. While these regulations were intended to support conservation goals, they have placed an extraordinary burden on small businesses that rely on reasonable access to Chesapeake Bay fisheries to remain viable.

Maryland's charter captains operate small, family-owned businesses that support tourism and local economies throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. The impact of recent restrictions extends well beyond charter vessels themselves, affecting marinas, bait and tackle shops, waterfront restaurants, hotels, and other small businesses that depend on recreational fishing activity.

Industry Impact

- Charter fishing businesses have experienced an estimated 65–70 percent reduction in activity over the past two years.
- 407 charter boats are currently registered in Maryland's FACTS electronic reporting system.
- Hundreds of small businesses depend on access to Chesapeake Bay fisheries.
- Many county economies along the Chesapeake Bay rely heavily on recreational fishing and charter boat activity.

While the charter sector represents only a small portion of the overall striped bass harvest, it has carried a disproportionate share of the economic impact from recent regulatory changes. Charter fishing provides a highly managed and accountable way for the public to access Maryland's fisheries while generating substantial economic activity for waterfront communities.

At the same time, we recognize the importance of responsible conservation. Targeting striped bass during spawning months in the Chesapeake Bay creates a significant risk to the reproductive success of the species and its ability to rebuild to sustainable levels. Protecting spawning females during this critical period is essential to achieving long-term recovery goals.

Senate Bill 755 offers a balanced and responsible path forward—protecting the striped bass spawning population while helping Maryland's charter fishing businesses recover from unprecedented economic losses.

For these reasons, the Maryland Charter Boat Association respectfully urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 755.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian L. Hardman

President

Maryland Charter Boat Association

910 Kentmorr Road

Stevensville, Maryland 21666

University Of Massachusetts Striped Bass Report.pdf

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Position: FAV



STRIPED BASS ARE STRUGGLING; UMASS AMHERST BIOLOGISTS KNOW HOW TO HELP

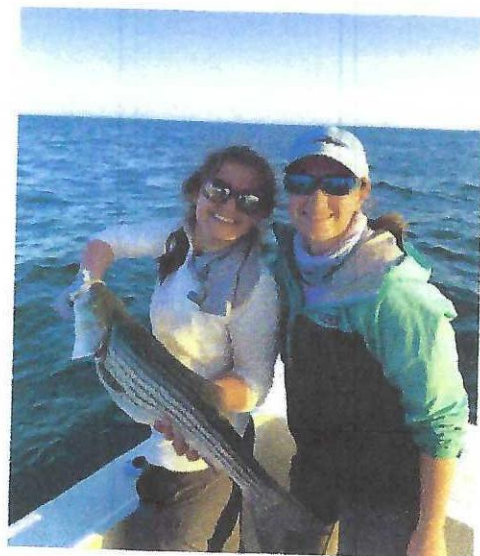
Reducing air exposure, fight times, water temps, as well as increasing angler education, are key to a sustainable fishery

December 2, 2025

CONTACT

[Daegan Miller](mailto:drmiller@umass.edu)
(<mailto:drmiller@umass.edu>)

While there are only four official seasons in the year, anglers in the Northeast recognize a fifth: striper season, the months from May to November when striped bass, which can grow up to 100 pounds and are renowned for their fight once hooked, migrate along the coastal waters between



*Lead author Olivia Dinkelacker (l)
and principal author Grace*

the Chesapeake and Canadian Maritimes within range of thousands of fishing lures. But the fishery, which generated approximately \$13 billion in economic

activity along the Eastern seaboard in 2016, is crashing, despite the fact that the vast majority of bass caught by recreational anglers are released back into the ocean.

Casselberry (r) with one of the most sought-after species of fish in New England – striped bass. Top: Despite the fact that most stripers are caught by recreational anglers, who then release the fish back into the ocean, their stocks are crashing. Credit for photos: Andy Danylchuk.

A pair of recent papers, led by biologists at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and published in Fisheries Research (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2025.107459>) and Marine and Coastal Fisheries

(<https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdoi.org%2F10.1093%2Fmcfafs%2Fvtaf042&data=05%7C02%7Cdrmilller%40umass.edu%7C000b3b90a2524427e16708de31bfd87a%7C7bd08b0b33954dc194bbd0b2e56a497f%7C0%7C0%7C639002897519603016%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDEwMCIslIAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoiTWFpbCIsIlIdUjjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2L1v2Ea7xpOe1BJAFq5NM1gVHxg8cMI21PSxyZ8E%2FqM%3D&reserved=0>), sought to

comprehensively pinpoint which catch-and-release fishing practices pose a considerable risk to striped bass, and to show that there's a mismatch between what anglers know about catch-and-release best practices and how this knowledge translates into action once on the water.

"Striped bass are one of, if not the most sought-after species of fish in New England and the Eastern seaboard," says Grace Casselberry (<https://gracecasselberry.squarespace.com/>), a postdoctoral researcher at UMass Amherst and one of the principal authors of the two recent studies. "Especially in

Cape Cod, where we conducted the majority of our research, stripers are an integral part of the local industry and culture.”

Despite their popularity, “many orders of magnitude more stripers are caught by recreational anglers than commercial fishers,” says [Andy Danylchuk](https://www.fishforward.org/) (<https://www.fishforward.org/>), professor of fish conservation at UMass Amherst and the paper’s senior author. And because of conservation and management measures meant to maintain or even rebuild striped stocks, not all that are caught are kept.



Principal author Grace Casselberry records fish length and reflex assessment results with a research angler at the Cheeky Schoolie Tournament. Credit: Grace Casselberry.

Although a growing proportion of stripers are thrown back by anglers, the fishery is in danger of collapse. To determine the reasons, the UMass team sought to examine not only the effect of catch-and-release fishing on the stripers, but also get a detailed look at how anglers handle the fish.

Teaming up with guides, fishing clubs and fishing tournament contestants—“research anglers,” Danylchuk calls these rod-toting community scientists—lead author Olivia Dinkelacker, who completed this research as part of her Master’s research at UMass Amherst, Casselberry, Danylchuk and their coauthors caught 521 striped bass over two years using a variety of conventional equipment and lures, from flies and flyrods to surfcasting rigs and long, fishlike lures dangling with three-pronged treble hooks.

The team measured how long it took to reel the striper in once it was hooked. Once landed, they gave it a quick set of reflex tests—a good prediction of fish stress and potential

mortality—which would be repeated just before release. The stripers were divided into groups that remained out of the water for 0, 10, 30, 60 and 120 seconds before being thrown back.

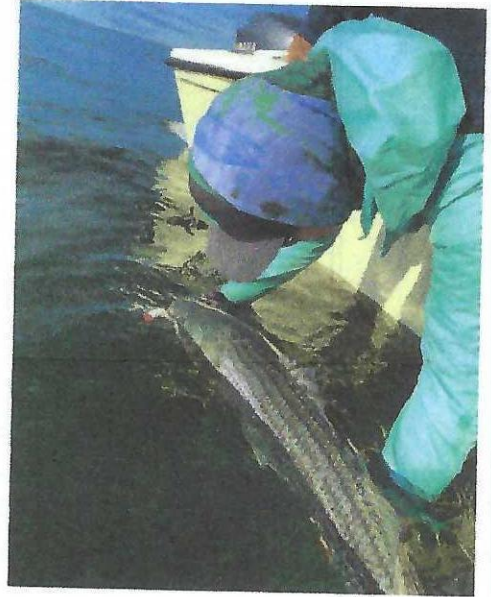
This was the first time that air exposure was scientifically and systematically tested to see its effects on striped bass.

A subset of 37 fish were fitted with a “triaxial accelerometer biollogger” velcroed to them and attached to fishing line. They were allowed to swim free for 20 minutes, then the team would retrieve the loggers and record the data, such as the fish’s acceleration and distance it swam.

They discovered that air exposure was the most significant factor influencing striped bass

stress and post-release swimming activity. Higher water temperatures, fighting for longer periods of time and getting hooked somewhere other than in the jaw all increased their recovery time.

Fish released immediately or after only 10 seconds retained most of their reflexes and recovered quickly, Casselberry said, adding that “stripers that had been out of the water for 60 seconds took 8–10 minutes to swim similarly to the low air exposure group.”



Striped bass that were out of the water for 120 seconds never fully recovered within the 20-minute window during which the team tracked their activity. Credit: Grace Casselberry



In addition to finding fish out of water for 120 never fully recovered during the 20 minute monitoring time, they also found that the bigger the fish, the greater toll of being hooked, landed and released. Reducing angler impacts on big fish, particularly females, is critical to the future of the population.

The team's findings suggest what many anglers already suspected: using lures or flies with single hooks, reducing fight and handling times, limiting air exposure and avoiding fishing during periods of high water temperatures are all key to preserving striped bass.



Principal author Grace Casselberry tests the body flex reflex prior to releasing a striped bass with an accelerometer data logger to monitor post-release swimming behavior. Credit: Andy Danylchuk

But how well is this knowledge being applied on the water?

Dinkelacker, Casselberry, Danylchuk and colleagues devised and distributed a comprehensive survey to wide swath of striper anglers, garnering 1,651 participants who mostly fished in

Massachusetts. The fishermen were grouped according to fishing method: conventional rod and tackle (57.4%) or fly fishing gear (42.6%).

Anglers ranked what they thought were most harmful to striped bass, from air exposure to fish size, and how often they engaged in catch-and-release best practices, among other questions.

The results revealed a consistent pattern showing that fly anglers were generally more conservation minded, showed a greater engagement in conservation practices, were more concerned about threats to the striped bass and voiced

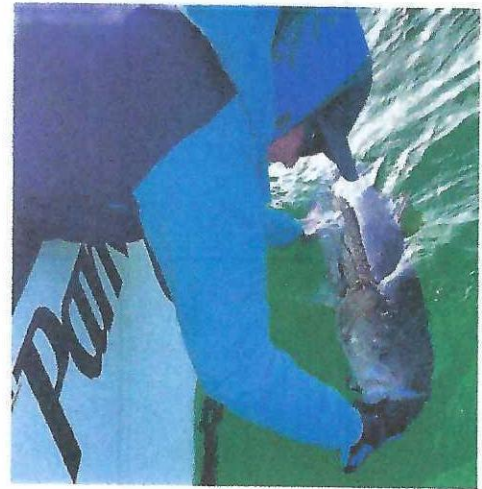
more support for stricter management practices. This was particularly true for air exposure, where a greater proportion of conventional anglers reported removing fish from the water than fly anglers.

Still, researchers say that anglers are some of the striper's best stewards, and that better, science-driven education is key to a healthy fishery.

"Thanks to the participation of so many research anglers throughout the Northeast, we now know the best

scientifically backed practices to help conserve the stripers," says Danylchuk. "Grassroots conservation efforts and fisheries management and policy has to be squarely informed by sound science, otherwise the striper stocks will remain in peril."

Funding for this research was provided by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute Sea Grant.



Striped bass can grow to more than 100 pounds and generate billions of dollars in economic activity. Credit: Grace Casselberry

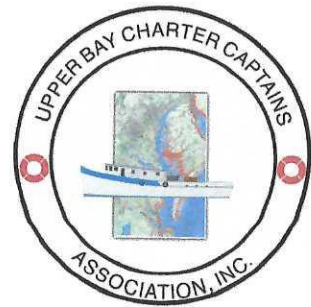
Upper Bay Charter Captains Assoc Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Brian Hardman

Position: FAV

Upper Bay Charter Captains Association

c/o Michael Smolek
243 Obrecht Rd.
Sykesville, MD 21784



Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Senate Bill 755

Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Testimony in **SUPPORT**

Friday, March 6, 2026

The Upper Bay Charter Captains Association respectfully submits this letter in full support of Senate Bill 755, with the amendments included in the latest draft of the bill.

The Upper Bay Charter Captains Association stands alongside both the Charter Boat Industry and the Commercial Fishing Industry in full support of Senate Bill 755. The Charter Boat Industry and Commercial Fishing Industry are in lockstep together on Striped Bass issues.

The Upper Bay Charter Captains Association urges a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 755.

Sincerely,

Captain Michael Smolek

President, Upper Bay Charter Captains Association, Inc.

Contact: msmolek@comcast.net or 443-280-4410

Amendment SB 755.pdf

Uploaded by: C. Anthony Muse

Position: FAV



SB0755/743925/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

06 MAR 26
14:41:25

BY: Senator Muse
(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 755

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 5, after “bass” insert “during certain months”; and in line 7, strike “and a trophy season for striped bass”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 2, in line 5, after “SEASON” insert “, **FROM MARCH 1 THROUGH APRIL 30, INCLUSIVE,**”; and in line 9, strike “**16**” and substitute “**1**”.

On pages 2 and 3, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 26 on page 2 through line 14 on page 3, inclusive.

SB 755 Final Reprint with Amendment.pdf

Uploaded by: C. Anthony Muse

Position: FAV

SENATE BILL 755
EMERGENCY BILL

M2, P3

6lr3487

By: **Senators Muse and Hershey**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries**
3 **Regulations**

4 FOR the purpose of prohibiting the Department of Natural Resources from establishing a
5 recreational catch and release season for striped bass during certain months; requiring
6 the Department to
7 establish certain recreational and charter boat summer and fall striped bass seasons
8 ~~and a trophy season for striped bass~~; requiring the Department to complete and
9 submit to certain State entities for review an economic impact statement for any
10 proposed fisheries regulations identified by the Department as having a major
11 impact on interested stakeholders; and generally relating to recreational fishing
seasons for striped bass and fisheries regulations.

12 BY adding to
13 Article – Natural Resources
14 Section 4–731.1
15 Annotated Code of Maryland
16 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
18 Article – State Government
19 Section 10–110(a), (b), and (c)(1)(i), (2)(i), and (3)
20 Annotated Code of Maryland
21 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

22 BY adding to
23 Article – State Government
24 Section 10–110(b–1)
25 Annotated Code of Maryland
26 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

2 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 755 as amended by SB0755/743925/1 03/06/26 at 2:41 PM

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
2 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 Article – Natural Resources

4 4-731.1.

5 (A) THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT ESTABLISH A CATCH AND RELEASE SEASON, FROM MARCH 1 THROUGH
6 APRIL 30, INCLUSIVE,
7 FOR STRIPED BASS, COMMONLY KNOWN AS ROCKFISH.

8 (B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT ANNUALLY SHALL ESTABLISH A
9 RECREATIONAL AND CHARTER BOAT SUMMER AND FALL STRIPED BASS SEASON
10 BEGINNING ~~MAY 16~~ 1 EACH YEAR AND ENDING ~~DECEMBER 10~~ EACH YEAR.

11 (2) FOR THE RECREATIONAL SUMMER AND FALL STRIPED BASS
12 SEASON, A PERSON:

13 (I) MAY NOT CATCH OR POSSESS MORE THAN ONE STRIPED
14 BASS PER DAY; AND

15 (II) MAY USE AS BAIT SHAD OR ARTIFICIAL LURES DESIGNED TO
16 MIMIC SHAD THAT ARE OF ANY SIZE.

17 (3) FOR THE CHARTER BOAT SUMMER AND FALL STRIPED BASS
18 SEASON:

19 (I) A PERSON MAY NOT CATCH OR POSSESS MORE THAN TWO
20 STRIPED BASS PER DAY;

21 (II) NOT MORE THAN 12 LINES PER BOAT MAY BE IN THE WATER
22 AT ANY ONE TIME;

23 (III) PLANER BOARDS MAY NOT EXTEND MORE THAN 75 FEET ON
24 EITHER SIDE OF THE BOAT; AND

25 (IV) NOT MORE THAN 75 SPOT FISH PER PERSON MAY BE ON
26 BOARD THE BOAT FOR BAIT.

27 ~~(C) (1) THE DEPARTMENT ANNUALLY SHALL ESTABLISH A TROPHY
28 SEASON FOR STRIPED BASS.~~

29 ~~(2) (i) THE 2026 TROPHY SEASON FOR CATCHING STRIPED BASS
IS:~~

3 REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 755 as amended by SB0755/743925/1 03/06/26 at 2:41 PM

1 ~~1. FROM APRIL 17 THROUGH APRIL 19, INCLUSIVE;~~

2 ~~2. FROM APRIL 24 THROUGH APRIL 26, INCLUSIVE; AND~~

3 ~~3. FROM MAY 1 THROUGH MAY 3, INCLUSIVE.~~

4 ~~(H) IN 2027 AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE DEPARTMENT~~
5 ~~SHALL ESTABLISH A TROPHY SEASON FOR STRIPED BASS THAT CONSISTS OF:~~

6 ~~1. TWO PERIODS OF 3 CONSECUTIVE DAYS IN LATE~~
7 ~~APRIL; AND~~

8 ~~2. ONE PERIOD OF 3 CONSECUTIVE DAYS IN LATE APRIL~~
9 ~~OR EARLY MAY.~~

10 ~~(3) DURING TROPHY SEASON, A PERSON MAY NOT CATCH OR POSSESS~~
11 ~~STRIPED BASS THAT ARE LESS THAN 28 INCHES IN LENGTH.~~

12 ~~(4) DURING THE TROPHY SEASON, A PERSON MAY NOT USE AS BAIT~~
13 ~~SHAD OR ARTIFICIAL LURES DESIGNED TO MIMIC SHAD THAT ARE LESS THAN 9~~
14 ~~INCHES LONG OR HAVE MORE THAN ONE TRAILER HOOK.~~

15 Article – State Government

16 10–110.

17 (a) Except for subsection (c) of this section, this section does not apply to a
18 regulation adopted under § 10–111(b) of this subtitle.

19 (b) At least 15 days before the date a proposed regulation is submitted to the
20 Maryland Register for publication under § 10–112 of this subtitle, the promulgating unit
21 shall submit to the State Children’s Environmental Health and Protection Advisory
22 Council established under § 13–1503 of the Health – General Article for review any
23 proposed regulations identified by the promulgating unit as having an impact on
24 environmental hazards affecting the health of children.

25 **(B-1) AT LEAST 15 DAYS BEFORE THE DATE A PROPOSED REGULATION**
26 **GOVERNING FISHERIES IS SUBMITTED TO THE MARYLAND REGISTER FOR**
27 **PUBLICATION UNDER § 10–112 OF THIS SUBTITLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL**
28 **RESOURCES SHALL COMPLETE AND SUBMIT TO THE COMMITTEE, THE**
29 **DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES, AND THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR REVIEW**
30 **AN ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT FOR ANY PROPOSED REGULATIONS IDENTIFIED**
31 **BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AS HAVING A MAJOR IMPACT ON**
32 **INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS.**

4 **REPRINT OF SENATE BILL 755 as amended by SB0755/743925/1 03/06/26 at 2:41 PM**

1 (c) (1) (i) At least 15 days before the date a proposed regulation is
2 submitted to the Maryland Register for publication under § 10–112 of this subtitle, and in
3 accordance with § 10–111.2(c) of this subtitle, the promulgating unit shall submit the
4 proposed regulation to the Committee, the Department of Legislative Services, and the
5 Administrator.

6 (2) (i) If the proposed regulation, either in whole or in part, submitted
7 to the Committee and the Department of Legislative Services in accordance with paragraph
8 (1) of this subsection includes an increase or decrease in a fee for a license to practice any
9 business activity, business or health occupation, or business or health profession licensed
10 or otherwise regulated under State law, the promulgating unit shall include clearly written
11 explanatory reasons that justify the increase or decrease in the fee.

12 (3) If the promulgating unit estimates that the proposed regulation will
13 have a significant small business impact, the unit shall:

14 (i) establish an electronic registry that allows any small business or
15 other interested party to register to receive an electronic notification when the proposed
16 regulation or the scope of the proposed regulation is posted on the unit's website in
17 accordance with item (ii) of this paragraph;

18 (ii) post the proposed regulation or the scope of the proposed
19 regulation on the unit's website at least 15 days before the date the proposed regulation is
20 submitted to the Committee and the Department of Legislative Services in accordance with
21 this section and provide an opportunity for comments on the unit's proposal;

22 (iii) on posting a proposed regulation or the scope of the proposed
23 regulation on the unit's website in accordance with item (ii) of this paragraph, notify the
24 parties registered in the electronic registry established under item (i) of this paragraph
25 that the proposed regulation or the scope of the proposed regulation has been posted; and

26 (iv) prepare a compliance guide written in clear, plain English to
27 assist small businesses in complying with the proposed regulation, update the guide as
28 needed until the regulation is final, and post the guide on the unit's website.

29 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act is an emergency
30 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has
31 been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to
32 each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is
33 enacted.

SB 755 Written Testimony .pdf

Uploaded by: C. Anthony Muse

Position: FAV

C. ANTHONY MUSE
Legislative District 26
Prince George's County

Committees

Judicial Proceedings

Vice Chair, Executive Nominations

Rules



Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 422
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3092
800-492-7122 Ext. 3092
Anthony.Muse@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 755
Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Good afternoon, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee.

For the record, I am C. Anthony Muse, representing the 26th Legislative District in Prince George's County. I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 755.

Senate Bill 755 was introduced in response to serious concerns raised by stakeholders regarding regulations being considered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources affecting striped bass—known across Maryland as rockfish. These concerns center on two critical issues: 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.

First, SB 755 prohibits 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. There is growing concern about the ability of the striped bass spawning population to meet the 2029 target for spawning stock biomass. Achieving that benchmark is essential to maintaining a healthy and sustainable fishery.

Second, the bill provides clear statutory direction for recreational and charter boat summer and fall seasons, establishing consistent guidelines for anglers while maintaining reasonable conservation limits. We must recognize the real economic consequences facing Maryland's charter fishing industry. Regulations affecting striped bass have already had a substantial 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.

Equally important, SB 755 requires the Department to prepare and submit an economic impact statement when proposed fisheries regulations are expected to have a major impact on stakeholders. Regulations affecting fisheries do not occur in a vacuum. They have real

consequences for charter boat captains, recreational anglers, tourism operators, small businesses, and coastal communities across Maryland.

Proponents of this legislation will provide testimony highlighting how socioeconomic impacts have been disregarded, scientific studies have been basically dismissed; which show the harm to the striped bass population, and very important historic regulations have been ignored.

Senate Bill 755 seeks to bring greater balance to this conversation. It recognizes that responsible stewardship requires both sound science and thoughtful consideration of the communities whose livelihoods depend on the health of this fishery.

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the Northern Hemisphere and one of Maryland's most treasured natural resources. We have a responsibility to be good stewards of this ecosystem while also protecting the economic vitality of the communities that rely on it.

I respectfully urge the Committee to carefully consider the testimony presented by supporters of this bill and to move Senate Bill 755 forward so that Maryland can continue working toward a sustainable striped bass fishery while supporting the industries and communities that depend on it.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report.

Striped Bass (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Grace Wittig

Position: FAV

COUNTY COUNCIL OF DORCHESTER COUNTY
COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
501 Court Lane, P.O. Box 26
Cambridge, Maryland 21613
(410) 228-1700

GEORGE L. PFEFFER, JR., PRESIDENT
MIKE DETMER, VICE PRESIDENT
ROB KRAMER, JR.
WILLIAM V. NICHOLS
RICKY C. TRAVERS



JERRY JONES
COUNTY MANAGER
MACLEOD LAW GROUP LLC
COUNTY ATTORNEY

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support – Senate Bill 0755 – Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

On behalf of the Dorchester County Council, I respectfully offer its support for Senate Bill 0755 entitled, “Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations,” which prohibitS the Department of Natural Resources from establishing a recreational catch and release season for striped bass; requiring the Department to establish certain recreational and charter boat summer and fall striped bass seasons and a trophy season for striped bass; requiring the Department to complete and submit to certain State entities for review an economic impact statement for any proposed fisheries regulations identified by the Department as having a major impact on interested stakeholders; and generally relating to recreational fishing seasons for striped bass and fisheries regulations.

Dorchester County strongly supports SB 0755 because it advances a balanced and enforceable framework for the conservation and long-term sustainability of Maryland’s striped bass fishery. By strengthening regulatory oversight and clarifying management standards, this legislation promotes responsible stewardship of a critical natural resource while preserving lawful recreational and charter fishing opportunities.

The striped bass fishery is both an environmental asset and an economic driver for Dorchester County. Recreational anglers, charter operators, tackle retailers, and tourism-related businesses depend upon a stable and sustainable fishery. SB 0755 supports these local economic interests while reinforcing accountability within the State agencies charged with fisheries management. Therefore, we respectfully ask that you look favorably upon this bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter of support. If you have any questions, please contact the Council’s Office at (410) 228-1700.

Sincerely,

George L. Pfeffer, Jr.
President

cc:
The Honorable Johnny Mautz, Senator
The Honorable Christopher T. Adams, Delegate
The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes, Delegate
The Honorable Tom Hutchinson, Delegate

PGCBA-SB0755-Testimony 03-06-2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Gaskins

Position: FAV



PRINCE GEORGE'S CONTRACTORS & BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

6710 Oxon Hill Road, Suite 210, Oxon Hill, Maryland 20746

Good afternoon, **Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan**, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

For the record, I am John Young, representing the Prince George's County Contractors & Business Association and myself as a successful business owner, resident, boat owner and an avid fisherman living in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

The Business Association is honored to support Bill SB0755 - Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations.

This emergency legislation brings to the attention of the state of Maryland devastation that is occurring within the fisheries industry that affects us all and could force over 400 charter boat owners, many other hospitality industry business owners and tourism on the eastern shore and southern Maryland to close forever.

Also, the protection of the striped bass during the spawning industry is vitally important to meet the 'spawning stock biomass' target and to maintain a health fishery industry. During this time, the species is most vulnerable and targeting them—even through catch-and-release—raises legitimate concerns about the long-term sustainability of the population.

I ask you today to support Senate Bill 0755, which seeks to protect the striped bass population while also supporting Maryland's fishing economy.

John Young, Board of Directors
Prince George's Contractors & Business Associations
(240) 876-0347

SB0755 - MBCP-Testimony 03-10-2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Gaskins

Position: FAV



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!

Joe Gaskins, Co-chairman
Maryland Business & Clergy Partnership
Joeg.BusinessClergyPartnership@gmail.com
(240) 286-8567

Delmarva Fisheries Association

Uploaded by: Robert Newberry

Position: FAV



110 N. CROSS STREET
CHESTERTOWN, MARYLAND 21620
PHONE: 410-810-1381
FAX: 410-810-1383
www.del-mar-vafisheriesassociation.org

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Senate Bill 755

Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Testimony in **SUPPORT**

Friday, March 6, 2026

The Delmarva Fisheries Association, Inc. (DFA) respectfully submits this letter in full support of Senate Bill 755, with the amendments included in the latest draft of the bill.

The Delmarva Fisheries Association stands alongside both the charter boat industry and the commercial fishing industry in full support of Senate Bill 755. The charter boat industry and the commercial striped bass industry are in lockstep together on striped bass issues.

DFA urges a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 755.

Sincerely,

Captain Robert Newberry
Chairman & President
Delmarva Fisheries Association, Inc.

CONTACT: Capt. Robert Newberry at 410-708-9851 or rnewberry56@gmail.com

DFA represents over 80% of the commercial watermen in Maryland; individuals whose work and unique way of life spanning several generations depend upon sustainable harvests in a healthy Chesapeake Bay.

02.24.26 SUPPORT of Senate Bill 0755 – Natural Res

Uploaded by: Shelley Heller

Position: FAV



The County Commissioners of Kent County
Ronald H. Fithian, President | Albert H. Nickerson, Member | John F. Price, Member
Shelley L. Heller, County Administrator | G. Robert Mowell, County Attorney

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: SUPPORT Senate Bill 0755 Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

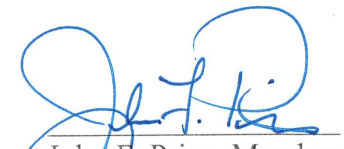
We, the County Commissioners of Kent County, Maryland, are pleased to submit this letter of support for Senate Bill 0755 - Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations. This emergency legislation addresses critical conservation and community concerns regarding the future of striped bass in Maryland's fisheries. SB0755 safeguards striped bass sustainability while maintaining robust recreational and charter fishing opportunities. It supports our local economy from fishing charters and gear shops to tourism, while demanding accountability from regulatory agencies.

Kent County fully supports SB0755 as drafted.

Sincerely,
THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND


Ronald H. Fithian, President


Albert H. Nickerson, Member


John F. Price, Member

cc: The Honorable Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.
The Honorable C. Anthony Muse
The Honorable Jay A. Jacobs
The Honorable Steven J. Arentz
The Honorable Jefferson L. Ghrist

SB755 Support Letter QAC Commissioners001.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephanie Jarrell

Position: FAV



Queen Anne's County

THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

The Liberty Building
107 North Liberty Street
Centreville, MD 21617

e-mail: QACCommissioners&Administrator@qac.org

County Commissioners:

- James J. Moran, At Large
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1
J. Patrick McLaughlin, District 2
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

County Administrator: Todd R. Mohn, PE
Executive Assistant to County Commissioners: Stephanie L. Jarrell
County Attorney: Patrick Thompson, Esquire

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB755 – Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations
SUPPORT

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee:

We proudly submit this letter in support of Senate Bill 755, Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations. This emergency legislation confronts urgent conservation challenges and mounting community concerns about the future of striped bass in Maryland's waters. Senate Bill 755 takes decisive action to protect the long-term sustainability of this iconic fishery while preserving meaningful recreational and charter fishing opportunities.

By balancing conservation with access, the bill strengthens Maryland's coastal economy — supporting charter captains, tackle and gear shops, tourism businesses, and the communities that depend on them. At the same time, it reinforces transparency and accountability within our regulatory framework to ensure science-based, responsible stewardship moving forward.

Senate Bill 755 represents a critical step toward securing both the ecological health of our fisheries and the economic vitality of our waterfront communities.

Respectfully,

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

James J. Moran, President

Christopher M. Corchiarino

Jack N. Wilson, Jr.

Philip L. Dumenil

J. Patrick McLaughlin

SB 755 Written Testimonial Jason Seman.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Seman

Position: FWA



**Maryland Fishing and Hunting, LLC
P.O. Box 31
Stevensville, MD 21666**

Letter of Support: SB755 Natural Resources- Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

The Charter Boat Captains, Watermen, and Recreational Fishermen of Maryland have suffered from the most recent Fishery Management decisions. SB 755 establishes a structured season that one of the most historic industries in Maryland has lacked and adds additional protective measures that are for the betterment of the Atlantic's Striped Bass Population.

SB 755 Establishes:

- A season that is consistent with Maryland's Seasonal Striped Bass Commercial Fishery Management Plan. The current commercial season does not allow commercial harvest of Striped Bass during the historical Spawning months of March and April when the Spawning Stock Biomass is most fecund and vulnerable (unless emergency action is taken). The Atlantic Coasts Striped Bass Spawning Stock Biomass is of the utmost importance for the future of our fishery and promoting this activity during this time period has numerous consequences.
- Establishes a Season that promotes seasonal access to the Striped Bass population that mostly targets a Male resident stock.
- Promotes access to the fishery and provides the most economic benefit to local communities when Maryland FACTS Reporting System, MRIP, and NOAA have deemed the most fishing effort to be practiced in Maryland.
- Establishes a season that the Professional Fishermen of Maryland currently lack.
- Takes preventive measures to limit gear type and improve navigational hazards on the Chesapeake Bay.
- Establishes the opportunity for the passengers of the Charter Boat Industry of Maryland's to harvest two Striped Bass per person per day. This regulatory changes purpose is to help the Professional Fishermen of Maryland recover from the economic peril that the previous reductions have had on the industry.

SB 755 reinforces the current position of Maryland DNR who previously took protective action to protect the Striped Spawning Stock over the past several seasons. In DNR's most recent March Newsletter "Striped Bass Spawning Success Not Limited by Zooplankton, DNR Study Suggests"

"DNR biologists have emphasized the need to enforce protective regulations for adult striped bass in order to maintain a healthy breeding population. When the environmental conditions are right, a good stock of spawners could bring a large year class into the Chesapeake.

By Joe Zimmermann, science writer with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources"

In a recent article about “**Dozens of Fish, Crabs and Birds Was Ashore at Calvert Cliffs State Park In “Nexus Event”**” by Bay Net **MDE investigator Chris Luckett** said during a recent fish kill “that fish suffered from temperature stress related to catch and release fishing.” “a sudden temperature change, even of just a few degrees, can be a huge shock to the fish’s system.”

Source: <https://thebaynet.com/dozens-of-dead-fish-crabs-and-birds-wash-ashore-at-calvert-cliffs-state-park-in-nexus-event/>

It is important for Maryland to remember at the 2025 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Winter Meeting the overwhelming concern was **how additional reductions would impact the fishermen** in the room and **if they could survive** to make it to the next Amendment. The result was that Commission voted to decline additional reductions. **SB 755** in the initial step in providing stability to the Charter Boat Industry of Maryland that it currently lacks and hopefully **will be the first step in revitalizing this Legacy Industry & the others that have been consequently affected.**

Since the adoption of the last ASMFC Addendum, Fifty Four Charter Boats have been listed or sold and Five Tackle Stores have closed in the State of Maryland due to economic hardships. For perspective, last season the Maryland Charter Boats harvested 34,985 Striped Bass (2024), down from 100,997 the year before (2023). As of September 15, 2025 from Public Information Request the Charter Boats of Maryland had harvested via the FACTS Reporting System 26,566 Striped Bass. The total number of trips were reduced from 11,362 (2023) to 5,412 (2024) and the numbers are projected to be lower in 2025. The number of anglers on Maryland Charter Boats also declined from 78,839 (2023) to 50,955 (2024) by the end of 2024. Year to date (9/15/2025) in 2025 the reporting Charter Fleet has only hosted 35,117 passengers in Maryland.

Recruitment of the Striped Bass Spawning Stock Biomass and Accessibility to one of the Atlantic's greatest resources is of the utmost importance. It is the greatest concern to the Charter Boat Captains and Watermen of the Chesapeake Bay.

We appreciate your support and willingness to help the Fishing Community of Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Captain Jason Seman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Captain Jason Seman
Maryland Fishing and Hunting, LLC
Vice President of Maryland Charter Boat Association
P.O. Box 31
Stevensville, MD 21666

SB755 Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisher

Uploaded by: Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio

Position: FWA



Talbot Watermen Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 324 • Bozman, MD 21612 • (410) 745-9759 • info@talbotwatermen.org

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

Contact:

Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
R&R Solutions, LLC
(443) 786-2137
jeannie@randrsolutions.us

Talbot Watermen Association, Inc. is a component fund of the
Mid-Shore Community Foundation, a 501(c)(3) public charity.

SB 755 - CBF - UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: UNF



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 755

Natural Resources - Striped Bass Recreational Seasons and Fisheries Regulations

Date: March 10, 2026

To: Education, Energy & Environment Committee

Position: **UNFAVORABLE**

From: Allison Colden,
Maryland Executive Director

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES Senate Bill 755** which would set statutory striped bass recreational fishing seasons and bag limits and prohibit the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from setting catch-and-release fishing seasons. These provisions directly conflict with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)'s adaptive, science-based framework for rebuilding the overfished Atlantic striped bass stock by 2029 and would place Maryland at serious risk of ASMFC non-compliance, jeopardizing the fishery, the Bay economy, and Maryland's credibility within the interstate cooperative management framework.

Striped Bass Populations are on the Brink & Adaptive Management is Key

According to the latest stock assessment update, striped bass remain overfished, meaning that there are not enough fish in the population to ensure long-term sustainability. This has been the case for the past seven years, which prompted ASMFC, per the requirements of the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan, to implement changes to fishing regulations that help striped bass rebuild to their target numbers by 2029, including shortened seasons, one-fish bag limit, and size restrictions.

Even with the conservation actions taken to date, the recovery of striped bass is not guaranteed. A 2025 analysis acknowledged that without additional controls, the probability of rebuilding by 2029 was <50%, driven by seven years of reproductive failure in Maryland. Even with a modest uptick from 2023–2024 lows, this sustained reproductive failure threatens future striped bass populations and fishery stability. Given these realities, management of this fishery must remain adaptive to allow tightening or modifying measures as recruitment, fishing mortality, and compliance data warrant.

SB 755 Undermines Interstate Management and Risks Non-Compliance

ASMFC's cooperative compact exists precisely because migratory coastal stocks cross state lines and need consistent, science-based measures. Congress recognized that disparate, inconsistent state rules harm resource conservation. The Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) affirms that a single state's failure to implement required measures can undermine the entire coastwide plan.

By legislating fixed seasons and prohibiting catch-and-release seasons, SB 755 would constrain DNR from implementing ASMFC-directed adjustments (e.g., slot changes, season closures, targeted protections) on the timelines the Commission sets. If Maryland cannot implement mandatory provisions, ASMFC may issue a non-compliance finding, and after NOAA's review, the Secretary must impose a moratorium if the unmet measures are necessary for conservation. That would halt all striped bass fishing in Maryland's waters, a far worse scenario for anglers, tackle shops, charter businesses and waterfront communities. Certainly, the economic impacts of a moratorium far outweigh the impacts of conservation actions necessary to protect the species.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

Striped Bass Conservation Actions are on Solid Legal Footing

Maryland stakeholders, including the Maryland Charter Boat Association and the Delmarva Fisheries Association, have repeatedly filed lawsuits in state and federal courts attempting to block striped bass regulations, and these cases have uniformly failed. In *Delmarva Fisheries Association, Inc. v. ASMFC* (Fourth Circuit, 2025), the court dismissed the case for lack of standing, finding that Maryland, not ASMFC, directly regulates the plaintiffs, and that even if ASMFC's plan were enjoined, Maryland would likely keep its own protective regulations in place.

Additional suits filed in federal courts, including emergency petitions to the U.S. Supreme Court and challenges in the D.C. District Court, have likewise been rejected or left without relief, with courts consistently emphasizing that the challenged restrictions reflect Maryland's voluntary regulatory decisions and ASMFC's *lawful authority to require conservation measures under the interstate compact*. Earlier Maryland-based lawsuits attacking ASMFC's Addendum II also failed, with courts scrutinizing and dismissing plaintiffs' claims that the Commission exceeded its authority or misrepresented stock status, noting that the 2022 stock assessment clearly showed the species was overfished.

Collectively, these outcomes underscore that Maryland's striped bass protections rest on a solid legal foundation, and challenges brought by industry groups have consistently collapsed because they cannot overcome the statutory structure of interstate management or establish that the science-based conservation measures are improper or unlawful.

CBF has consistently urged prompt, science-based actions at ASMFC and by Maryland DNR to meet the 2029 rebuilding target, highlighting persistent recruitment failures in the Chesapeake, the need to limit removals (including release mortality), and the importance of habitat, forage, invasive predators, and climate impacts. SB 755 moves the opposite direction, codifying seasons and prohibiting a key management tool, while risking non-compliance with the very interstate system needed to rebuild the fishery that sustains Maryland's recreational and for-hire sectors over the long term.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 755.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

SB755_Fish_Boat_LtrFinal.pdf

Uploaded by: David Sikorski

Position: UNF

Opposition to Senate Bill 755 – Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons & Fisheries Regulations

Honorable Members of the Senate EEE Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned recreational fishing, boating, and conservation organizations, we write to express our **opposition to Senate Bill 755 – Natural Resources – Striped Bass Recreational Seasons & Fisheries Regulations.**

This legislation is inconsistent with overarching coastwise management plans for striped bass, and if passed, **could trigger action to shut down all of Maryland's striped bass fisheries; recreational, for-hire/charter, and commercial.**

Maryland's striped bass fishery is central to the culture and economy of Chesapeake Bay communities. Anglers, guides, marinas, tackle retailers, and coastal businesses depend on responsible, science-based management of this iconic species to fuel recreational access to our state fish.

For decades, striped bass management has been guided through coordination between the Maryland Department of Natural Resources(DNR) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission(ASMFC) to ensure regulations remain aligned with coast-wide conservation goals and responsive to stock conditions. Senate Bill 755 would override this established science-based framework by legislating season structures and fisheries regulations that are normally developed through a stakeholder and partnership driven regulatory and interstate management process.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to **not advance Senate Bill 755** and instead allow striped bass management decisions to continue through the established regulatory process led by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources in coordination with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission(ASMFC).

Sincerely,

Respectfully submitted,

David Sikorski, Executive Director
Coastal Conservation Association Maryland
Legislative Proxy- ASMFC

Mike Waine, Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Policy Dir.
American Sportfishing Association

Chad Tocowicz, Govt. Relations Manager
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas

John Stefancik, Executive Director
Marine Trades Assoc. Maryland

Capt. Keith Fraser
Alltackle.com - Ocean City, Md &
Annapolis,MD

Mike Ebersberger
Angler's Sport Center

Mark Kurth, President
Northwest Fishing Club

Chris Linetty, President
Frederick Saltwater Anglers Club

Phil Zalesak, President
Southern MD Rec. Fishing Org.

Dave Stith, President
Kent Island Fishermen

Lenny Rudow
Fish Talk Magazine

Capt. Tom Weaver
Weaver's Guide Service & Eastport Yacht Co.
Co-founder, MD Light Tackle Guides
Association

Capt. Steve Griffin
Griffin's Guide Service
Co-founder, MD Light Tackle Guides
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Capt. Jacob Beltz
Hookset Guide Service LLC.
Chesapeake Beach

Capt. Jonathan Bland
Bay Bound Guide Service

Capt. Frank Bonnano
Il Pescatore Guide Service

Brian Buckland
Chessie Marine Sales
Elkton, MD

Capt. Ron Buffington
JLS Light Tackle Charters & JLS Rods

Capt. James Clough
Eastern Shore Light Tackle Charters LLC

Michael & Brian Conner
Rhode River Marina Inc.

Capt. Pete Dahlberg
Four Season's Guide Service

Capt. Dennis Fleming
Chaptico, Maryland

Capt. Brad Foxwell
Chesapeake Fishing Adventures

Capt. Michael Gardner
Sandbar Light Tackle Fishing
Stevensville, MD

Capt. Gio Gargano
Griffin's Guide Service

Capt. Jeff Geary
Sick Day Charters
Salisbury, MD

Capt. Lawrence Geipe
Chasing Light Charters LLC

Captain Eric Goodrich
Stella Charters
Pasadena, MD

Capt. Drew Grahame
Griffin's Guide Service

Capt. Kayla Haile
River Queen Guide Service
TFL #2149

Capt. Lee Haile
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Capt. David Heath
C&S Sportfishing
Annapolis, MD

Captain Charles Hill
Chill's Light Tackle Guide Service
Baltimore

Capt. Matt Huss
East Wind Fishing

Capt. Chuck Jones
Salty Siren Fishing

Bill Judge
Judge Yachts

Capt. Travis Long
Schooled Up Fishing Charters
Chesapeake Beach, MD

Capt. Pat Love
Backcreek Charters

Capt. CL Marshall
Tangier Sound Charters

Travis McCann
Silver Tree Marine

Capt. Brian McCormick
Southern Girl Sportfishing
Annapolis & Deale, MD

Capt. Josh Pasquariello
Good Fish Outdoors
Annapolis, MD

Alan Ring
Reel Faith Fishing Charters
Salisbury, MD

Capt. John Rogers
Elkton, MD
TFL 4847

Capt. Brian Sabo
Old Line Charters

Capt. Brennan Shute
iFishMD.com Charters

Capt. Greg Shute
iFishMD.com Charters & Judge Yachts

Capt. Ethan Sommer
Sommertime Outdoors

Capt. Pedro Sousa-Paz
Vasco da Gama Charters
Edgewater

Capt. Jackson Talbott
Lite.Tackle MD

Capt. Brian Thomason
Thomason Tradition Sportfishing

Sam Weaver, President
Weaver's Marine Service

Capt. Brandon Wingate
Salt Tale Charters

SB0755_DNR_OPP_EEE_3-10-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Lydia McPherson

Position: UNF



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

March 10, 2026

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 755 - FIRST READER

SHORT TITLE: NATURAL RESOURCES - STRIPED BASS RECREATIONAL SEASONS AND FISHERIES REGULATIONS

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: OPPOSE

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

The Department opposes Senate Bill 755. The bill as written would put Maryland well outside of compliance with the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Fisheries Management Plan goals and objectives for coastwide management. Due to the importance of Maryland's portion of the Chesapeake Bay in the life cycle of striped bass, and the potential impacts Maryland's fisheries have on the coastwide population of striped bass, it is likely that ASMFC would recommend a non-compliance finding to NOAA Fisheries and recommend a closure of our fisheries - both commercial and recreational. A closure of the entire striped bass fishery in Maryland would have a huge impact on the marine economy in Maryland and numerous small businesses would be severely affected.

The bill also adds additional requirements under the Maryland Administrative Procedures Act. The agency has a fifteen-day public scoping process, which was required by the 2006 JCR. That process begins with discussing possible regulatory changes with the agency's main fisheries advisory bodies, followed by the fifteen-day public comment opportunity online. During that fifteen-day public comment opportunity, the agency posts the required small business impact guidelines in addition to any other information that is believed to be helpful in aiding citizens in commenting. Then staff works on regulation drafting after comments are reviewed and a decision on a proposed regulation is made. This addition adds another layer of complexity to an already complex system for rulemaking on Maryland fisheries. Additionally, adding additional weeks onto the rule making process which currently takes, at minimum, four to five months, makes creating timely regulations to begin with the start of fishing seasons even more challenging if not impossible. Having different rules during the same fishing season causes confusion amongst those fishing, which can lead to noncompliance and enforcement difficulties.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Striped bass are managed through the ASMFC, which is an interstate fishery management commission created by a compact that is incorporated into Maryland law under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-301. The ASMFC works through the Striped Bass Management Board to create and implement the goals and objectives of the Striped Bass Fisheries Management Plan. As a member

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
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of the ASMFC, Maryland participates in the drafting and implementation of the Fisheries Management Plan. A state cannot implement any less conservative regulations without prior review and approval from ASMFC.

Before any agency can implement a rules change in their jurisdiction that would affect the level of harvest in a fishery, proposed changes are reviewed for their compliance with the Fisheries Management Plan goals. This review includes the expected effectiveness of the proposal in reaching the goals of the plan. If a jurisdiction proceeds to implement rules that don't meet the established standards (in this case, the regulations proposed in SB755 would increase the level of striped bass harvest in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay), the ASMFC may recommend to NOAA Fisheries (U.S. Department of Commerce) that the jurisdiction be found out of compliance, which can result in a complete closure of that species' fisheries within the non-compliant jurisdiction.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill prohibits the agency from having a "catch-and-release" striped bass season and lays out an open striped bass recreational and charter boat season, including prescribing methods of catch and bait. The bill also requires the agency to submit an economic impact for any major impacts to interested stakeholders to AELR 15 days prior to submitting a regulation.

SB0755 unfavorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Sean Beck

Position: UNF

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.