

Senate Joint Resolution 6: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – Atlantic Menhaden – Prohibition on Commercial Reduction Fishing – Testimony of Phil Zalesak, 3/1/22

Slide 1: Good morning, my name is Phil Zalesak and I am here today to support Senate Joint Resolution 6

Slide 2: I represent ten Maryland recreational fishing organizations throughout the State of Maryland

Slide 3:

- Atlantic menhaden are an important forage fish for striped bass.
- Overharvesting of Atlantic menhaden by industrial reduction fishing by Omega Protein is threatening the survival of striped bass and other predators in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Omega Protein is the last remaining industrial reduction fishery on the Atlantic Coast.
- The picture at the bottom is a striped bass swallowing a menhaden.

Slide 4: The recreational striped bass market represent over 800 million dollars in GDP to the State of Maryland and over 10,000 jobs

Slide 5: Science Summary

Slide 6: Chesapeake Bay contributes about 60% of the Atlantic stock of striped bass in the Atlantic Ocean. When this Bay fish is threatened, it impacts the entire Atlantic Coast.

Slide 7: Since 2010 the recreational harvest has dropped 68% (5.3 million to 1.7 million fish)

Slide 8: The Young of Year, fish less than a year old, are now at a 40 year low.

Slide 9: The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has determined that there are not enough Atlantic menhaden along the Atlantic Coast to adequately feed striped bass and other predators.

- They cut the total allowable catch by 10% from 216,000 metric tons to 194,400 metric tons.
- 78% was allocated to the State of Virginia based on history not science.
- 90% of the Virginia allocation was allotted to Omega Protein for a total of 136,252 metric tons.
- That represents over 70% of the total allowable catch for the entire Atlantic Coast
- Of that 136,000 metric tons, 51,000 metric tons was allocated to reduction harvesting in the Chesapeake Bay

Slide 10: 51,000 metric tons is over 26% of the total allowable catch for the entire Atlantic Coast.

Slide 11 & 12: Based on 50 of research at William and Mary, Dr. Bryon Watts has concluded that there are not enough Atlantic menhaden in the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay to support the osprey population.

Slide 13: Based on the economic importance of striped bass to Maryland's economy and the latest science, the recreational fishermen in the State of Maryland support Senate Joint Resolution 6.