

Maryland Charter Boat Association, Inc.



April 15, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland

The Honorable Anthony Brown
Attorney General
State of Maryland
200 St. Paul Place
Baltimore, MD 21202

RE: Striped Bass Fishing Regulations

Dear Governor Moore and Attorney General Brown:

On January 24, 2024, the Atlantic States Marine and Fisheries Commission announced sweeping new regulatory limitations on commercial and recreational fishing for its member states including Maryland. The Maryland delegation voted in opposition to the Plan put forward by this Interstate Compact and we greatly appreciated the State governmental leadership taking this stand. Mr. Michael Luisi, Maryland's designee to the Commission told them that the measure "will put people out of business" in our state but they didn't seem to care and simply outvoted Maryland.

On Feb. 8, 2024, Delmarva Fisheries Association and the Maryland Charter Boat Association, on behalf of their 500 members filed suit in Federal court in Baltimore and moved shortly after that for a Preliminary Injunction. At that time, we estimated that business revenues would drop 50 percent due to the Plan limitation on one fish per day to recreational users including those using "for hire" charter boats. Several individual Eastern Shore counties and the entire Maryland Association of Counties wrote in opposition to the Plan's economic impact on related fishing-related businesses (and tax dollars) across the state.

On Feb. 12, 2024, the Federal Court in Baltimore denied that request even though we presented evidence that the business fall off was 75 percent or more, e.g., 62 charter reservations this time last year versus 16 at the

present time due to massive cancellations. The Hon. Richard D. Bennett, presiding, agree that we had demonstrated irreparable harm having already occurred but ruled that we had no private right to sue. He repeatedly said that under this Interstate Compact system, it was necessary for the Attorney General to request a stay in the regulation pending a decision on the merits. Our attorneys strongly disagreed with this conclusion but that is where we stand.

By this letter, we are earnestly requesting the assistance of the State and the intervention by the Office of the Attorney General on our behalf. Judge Bennett mentioned this step numerous times during the proceeding and there was little question in our mind that he fully appreciated the financial difficulties for all of us that are involved in this industry. Please help us take this procedural step that he deems necessary to protect our businesses over the course of the 2024 fishing season so that can still be here to pursue the full case later in the year.

Since COVID, many families rely on Striped Bass fishing, especially in the Chesapeake Bay is for subsistence purposes that can no longer be fairly termed "recreational." We have over 800 people from six other states along the Atlantic coast that are supporting our efforts on this matter, and the number grows daily.

Thank you for taking our emergency request under consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Rob Newberry

Captain Rob Newberry

Chairman

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