



April 25, 2025

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor, State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor Wes Moore,

On behalf of the undersigned coalition of recreational fishing and boating businesses, we express our gratitude for the work being done by your team at Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to consider modifications to striped bass fishing regulations in Maryland. DNR hosted two meetings of a joint striped bass committee that included a transparent assessment and discussion of economic trade-offs and biological benefits to possible season changes for striped bass. After participating in this process as members of the committee or as public participants, **we support Option 3 (Modified) as the right option to consider, and request that this option be advanced in Addendum III through the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) process by DNR, in advance of the next meeting.**

Option 3 (Modified) is structured as follows:

- Jan 1 - April 30: Catch and Release
- May 1 - July 31: Harvest (1 fish at 19-24 inches)
- Aug 1 - Aug 31: No Target Closure
- Sept 1 - Dec 6: Harvest (1 fish at 19-24 inches)
- Dec 7 - Dec 31: Catch and Release

This option balances angler access with conservation to sustain the striped bass fishery and the broader fishing and boating industry. Most importantly, the ASMFC process will allow for further public comment and an opportunity to deliberate further and consider what actions are necessary for striped bass moving forward.

Maryland's recreational fishing and boating industry, generating \$4.2 billion annually and supporting over 16,000 jobs across more than 1,000 businesses, is a cornerstone of the state's economy and water-adjacent communities. From the Chesapeake Bay to the 3,190 miles of coastline, our waterways attract millions, fueling marinas, retailers, manufacturers, and advocacy groups. Option 3 (Modified) directly supports this economic engine by enhancing angler access while safeguarding the striped bass population for future generations.

We particularly appreciate moving from 304 days of total access (83%) under the current regulations to 334 days (92%) under Option 3 (Modified) because it adds meaningful fishing access for anglers and additional business opportunities for our industry. This includes an increase in catch-and-release days from 111 to 145 and a reduction in no-targeting days from 61

to 31, all while preserving 189 harvest days. These changes strike a thoughtful balance, supporting both the economic vitality of our businesses and the long-term health of the fishery and the overall striped bass population.

Maryland's inclusive approach has fostered trust and collaboration among stakeholders, ensuring that the voices of recreational fishing and boating businesses, as well as the anglers we serve, are heard and valued. Option 3 (Modified) is a forward-thinking solution that aligns with our shared goals of economic prosperity and environmental stewardship.

Sincerely,

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