

**SAVE OUR MENHADEN COALITION RESOLUTION:  
END ATLANTIC MENHADEN REDUCTION FISHING  
IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ITS ENTRANCE**

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay fishery is at a point of ecological crisis due to federal and Virginia state mismanagement of the Atlantic menhaden reduction fishery; and

WHEREAS, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission can not provide scientific evidence that the spatial or seasonal stock of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay is healthy, and have failed to study the severity of localized menhaden and juvenile menhaden depletion due to menhaden reduction fishing; and

WHEREAS, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission menhaden quota for the Chesapeake Bay does not recognize the bay as a unique ecosystem, the current annual menhaden quota for the bay of 112 million pounds was made without consideration of regional ecosystem-based reference points or measurements of the Bay's ability to sustain life; and

WHEREAS, menhaden reduction lobbyists continue to block proposed scientific studies and public transparency measures needed to responsibly manage the menhaden fishery in the Chesapeake Bay and ensure the regional resource is available for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay is the largest nursery for Atlantic menhaden, an ecologically essential and nutrient-rich forage fish for species such as osprey, pelicans, herons, terns, gannets, dolphins, sharks, whales, tuna, bluefish, striped bass, redfish, weakfish, flounder, and speckled trout, all of which contribute to important commercial and recreational fisheries and regional economies; and

WHEREAS, federal and Virginia state agencies continue to allow up to 750 million menhaden to be removed from the Chesapeake Bay and its entrance every year, making the Chesapeake Bay the most concentrated menhaden extraction zone on the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, federal and Virginia state agencies continue to ignore regional ecological reference points in the Chesapeake Bay, such as the devastated and starving striped bass and osprey populations which are dependent on the menhaden fishery for nutrients and survival; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay striped bass population is at record low recruitment levels. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources 2023 juvenile striped bass survey for the Chesapeake Bay reported the young-of-year index as 1.0, well below the long-term average of 11.1 and the fifth straight year of poor reproductive success for Striped Bass, reproduction and survival rates are impacted by starvation which predispose striped bass to mycobacteriosis (fish wasting disease); and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay osprey population is at record low recruitment levels. According to Dr. Bryan Watts of the College of William and Mary, reductions in menhaden stocks have caused osprey reproductive productivity to decline to below DDT-era rates; and

WHEREAS, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission have not provided an accumulative environmental and economic impact assessment for the concentrated menhaden extraction and persistent fish spills occurring on the Eastern Shore of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, all other states on the Atlantic Coast have removed industrial menhaden reduction fishing from their bays, and have now recorded positive ecological and economic responses in doing so.

We are therefore committed to ending Atlantic menhaden reduction fishing in the Chesapeake Bay and its entrance.

**Adopted: February 26, 2024**

**Save Our Menhaden Coalition**

