

# **PETITION FOR RULEMAKING**

Pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-4007  
Before the Virginia Marine Resources Commission

Petition for Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fishing.

Tonya O’Conner, Petitioner

This petition was filed on 12/31/2026 and published in the Virginia Register of Regulations on 1/26/2026. The Comment Period began 1/26/2026 and ended 2/17/2026. During which time 1266 comments were received onto the Virginia Regulatory Townhall website.

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**VIRGINIA**  
REGULATORY TOWN HALL



**Secretariat** Natural and Historic Resources

**Agency** Marine Resources Commission

**Board** Marine Resources Commission

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Petition 449

**Petition Information**

<b>Petition Title</b>	Petition for Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fishing
<b>Date Filed</b>	12/31/2025 <a href="#">[Transmittal Sheet]</a>
<b>Petitioner</b>	Tanya O'Connor
<b>Petitioner's Request</b>	<p>1. Grant this petition by adopting a temporary moratorium on purse-seine reduction fishing for menhaden within the Chesapeake Bay and initiating rulemaking to amend 4VAC 20-1270-35.</p> <p>2. Maintain the moratorium until VMRC has affirmatively demonstrated, on the administrative record, compliance with all applicable statutory and public trust obligations, including that it has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Determined Bay-specific menhaden abundance and Bay-specific ecological dependence, including the needs of predator species, juvenile life stages, and dependent fisheries within the Chesapeake Bay, consistent with Va. Code §§ 28.2-204.1 and 28.2-203(2);</li> <li>b. Demonstrated, on the administrative record, compliance with the mandatory requirements of Va. Code § 28.2-204.1 by evaluating—before authorizing industrial menhaden removal—the impacts on species and fisheries, age structure, and the abundance of the resource;</li> <li>c. Demonstrated compliance with all fishery management standards set forth in Va. Code § 28.2-203, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Prevention of overfishing while achieving optimum yield (§ 28.2-203(1));</li> <li>ii. Reliance on the best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available (§ 28.2-203(2));</li> <li>iii. Management of individual and interrelated stocks as a unit, including forage-dependent predator species (§ 28.2-203(3));</li> <li>iv. Fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory management measures that do not grant excessive fishing privileges (§ 28.2-203(4));</li> <li>v. Promotion of efficient utilization of fishery resources without economic allocation as the sole purpose (§ 28.2-203(5));</li> <li>vi. Consideration of variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches (§ 28.2-203(6)); and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>vii. Minimization of unnecessary regulatory burdens while still achieving conservation objectives (§ 28.2-203(7));</p> <p>d. Demonstrated compliance with Va. Code § 28.2-204 by obtaining or commissioning necessary fisheries data and implementing independent monitoring, verification, and enforcement mechanisms sufficient to ensure compliance with any future authorization of industrial menhaden removals, including verification of landings, bycatch, juvenile impacts, and cumulative removals across fisheries; and</p> <p>e. Demonstrated satisfaction of interstate conservation responsibilities, including documented evaluation of cross-jurisdictional ecological and economic impacts within the Chesapeake Bay, consistent with Virginia's obligations under the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact (Va. Code § 28.2-1000 through 28.2-1000.2).</p> <p>The petitioner does not request a specific numerical quota and requests that no industrial reduction fishing resume until these conditions are satisfied.</p> <p>Review the full petition here:  <a href="https://mrc.virginia.gov/Notices/2026/Menhaden-Moratorium-Petition.pdf">https://mrc.virginia.gov/Notices/2026/Menhaden-Moratorium-Petition.pdf</a></p>
<b>Agency's Plan</b>	The Virginia Marine Resources Commission is submitting notice of the petition for publication in the Virginia Register of Regulations and announcing a public comment period. Following receipt of comments on the petition, the Commission will review the petition, and hear the petition in a public forum on April 21, 2026. Updates on the meeting will be posted on the <a href="http://www.mrc.virginia.gov">www.mrc.virginia.gov</a> website under Agency Meetings.
<b>Comment Period</b>	Began 1/26/2026 Ended 2/17/2026 <b>1266 comments</b>
<b>Virginia Register Announcement</b>	Submitted on 12/31/2025 <b><u>The Virginia Register of Regulations</u></b> Published on: 1/26/2026 Volume: 42 Issue: 12
<b>Agency Decision</b>	Pending

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*This petition was created by Joseph Grist on 12/31/2025 at 9:22am  
This petition was last modified by Joseph Grist on 12/31/2025 at 9:23am*

# PETITION FOR RULEMAKING

**Pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-4007  
Before the Virginia Marine Resources Commission**

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## I. PETITIONER

**Name:** Tanya O'Connor

**Status:** Virginia resident

**Interest:** The petitioner uses and enjoys the Chesapeake Bay for recreational and environmental purposes and is directly affected by regulatory decisions governing the management of its living marine resources held in trust by the Commonwealth.

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## II. AUTHORITY FOR PETITION

This petition is submitted pursuant to:

- Virginia Administrative Process Act, Va. Code § 2.2-4007, authorizing any person to petition an agency to adopt, amend, or repeal a regulation and requiring the agency to issue a written decision stating its reasons;
- Virginia Constitution, Article I, § 12 (right to petition the government); and
- Va. Code § 28.2-201, granting the Virginia Marine Resources Commission ("VMRC") authority to regulate fisheries in tidal waters.

VMRC is the agency responsible for the regulation identified below.

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## III. REGULATION AT ISSUE

### **4 VAC 20-1270-35 — Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Cap**

This regulation authorizes purse-seine reduction fishing for Atlantic menhaden within the Chesapeake Bay.

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## IV. STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. VMRC currently authorizes industrial removal of menhaden from the Chesapeake Bay under 4 VAC 20-1270-35.

2. At the time VMRC approved continued industrial menhaden removal under 4 VAC 20-1270-35, it did not have—and still does not have—a Bay-wide estimate of menhaden biomass, age structure, spatial distribution, recruitment trends, or localized depletion risk.
  3. VMRC has not conducted a Bay-specific analysis of the consumption needs, prey thresholds, or reproductive-season energy requirements of forage-dependent species, including osprey, striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, red drum, and marine mammals.
  4. These Bay-specific abundance and ecological-dependence data are necessary to evaluate the effects of industrial forage removal in the Chesapeake Bay and are required prior to authorizing such removal to fulfill VMRC's public trust and statutory management obligations.
  5. VMRC did not evaluate or document the economic impacts of industrial menhaden removal on the Chesapeake Bay bait fishery or on Bay-dependent economic activities, including sportfishing, bird watching, and crabbing, when approving reduction fishing under 4 VAC 20-1270-35.
  6. The Chesapeake Bay functions as a primary nursery for Atlantic menhaden, and effective management must ensure menhaden are not removed before reaching reproductive maturity and that older age classes are maintained to support recruitment stability and ecosystem function. VMRC's current authorization framework contains no measures designed to ensure such protection.
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## V. GROUNDS FOR PETITION

### A. Public Trust Obligations Governing Chesapeake Bay Resource Management

#### *A1. Public trust obligations require prudent decision-making*

Under Virginia common law, marine fisheries resources in tidal waters are held by the Commonwealth in trust for the public. *See Commonwealth v. City of Newport News*, 158 Va. 521, 164 S.E. 689 (1932); *Taylor v. Commonwealth*, 102 Va. 759, 47 S.E. 875 (1904); *Bradford v. Nature Conservancy*, 224 Va. 181, 294 S.E.2d 866 (1982).

This body of law—commonly referred to as the public trust doctrine—means that marine fisheries resources are not held for private exploitation, but are managed by the Commonwealth for the benefit of the public as a whole. Under this doctrine, the Commonwealth has an ongoing obligation to protect public marine resources from unreasonable impairment and to manage their use in a manner consistent with long-term public benefit.

Because the General Assembly has delegated regulatory authority over marine fisheries resources to VMRC, VMRC exercises that authority as the Commonwealth's designated decision-maker for purposes of managing public trust resources. VMRC's regulatory decisions

must therefore be consistent with the Commonwealth's public trust obligations when authorizing industrial use of those resources.

Authorizing industrial removal of a forage species from a nursery estuary without knowing population size or ecosystem reliance raises serious public trust concerns because it risks impairment of a public resource without sufficient information to evaluate those impacts.

### *A2. Public trust obligations require independent oversight*

The public trust obligation requires that the Commonwealth retain independent oversight over industrial use of public marine resources, sufficient to ensure that such use remains within authorized limits and does not impair trust resources. Management frameworks that depend on information supplied exclusively by the regulated entity are inconsistent with that obligation because they do not provide the independent confirmation necessary for meaningful public trust oversight.

### *A3. Public trust obligations extend to protection of habitat function*

Virginia law treats the Chesapeake Bay's submerged lands, tidal waters, and the habitat they support as public trust property. *See* Va. Code § 28.2-1200 *et seq.*; Va. Code § 28.2-201. Public trust obligations therefore extend beyond regulating harvest levels to protecting the functional integrity of public trust resources.

Menhaden function as a keystone forage species in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Industrial-scale removal of menhaden from Bay waters affects trophic structure and energy availability within nursery habitats associated with submerged lands. These impacts implicate habitat function, not merely fish harvest.

Authorizing industrial menhaden removal without accounting for effects on nursery function and submerged-land-associated habitats raises public trust concerns independent of stock-status determinations. Even where a species is designated "not overfished," VMRC's authority to manage fisheries does not extend to authorizing uses of public trust property that impair the habitat functions those resources support.

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## **B. Interstate Considerations Reinforce the Need for Caution**

Virginia is a member of the interstate compact establishing the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, codified at Va. Code §§ 28.2-1000 through 28.2-1000.2, and is obligated to cooperate in the conservation and management of shared migratory fishery resources. The Chesapeake Bay is the primary nursery area for Atlantic menhaden. Authorization of potentially localized depletion without adequate information risks undermining coast-wide management objectives, interstate conservation responsibilities, and the viability of dependent fisheries.

The Chesapeake Bay is a highly interconnected ecosystem in which ecological impacts in one jurisdiction directly affect species, habitats, fisheries, and Bay-dependent economic activities

throughout the system, including the menhaden bait fishery, as well as forage-dependent species such as striped bass and osprey, which rely on a stable and sustainable menhaden population.

In authorizing industrial menhaden removal within the Chesapeake Bay, VMRC has not evaluated the ecological or economic impacts of that activity on Maryland waters or on Bay-dependent fisheries and economic activities beyond Virginia. Because the Chesapeake Bay is jointly managed by Virginia and Maryland, interstate conservation responsibilities require that VMRC evaluate cross-jurisdictional ecosystem and economic impacts before authorizing industrial menhaden removal, reinforcing the need for precautionary management.

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### C. VMRC Has Authority to Obtain and Verify Fisheries Information, but Has Not Obtained Bay-Specific Data

Va. Code § 28.2-204 authorizes VMRC to collect fisheries statistics and require reporting necessary for fisheries management. That authority includes initiating, funding, or contracting for studies (i.e., commissioning) to obtain needed data; agencies are not limited to passively receiving information, and commissioning studies is a routine and legally accepted means of “collecting” fisheries data. Despite this authority, VMRC has not obtained or commissioned Bay-specific abundance or ecological-dependence information and continues to authorize industrial menhaden removals. Maintaining a regulation while declining to obtain readily identifiable and legally obtainable information leaves the regulatory record unable to demonstrate that continued authorization of the activity is lawful or justified.

In addition, when exercised in conjunction with VMRC’s public trust obligations, this statutory authority necessarily includes verification of reported data sufficient to ensure accuracy, compliance, and protection of public trust resources. VMRC relies almost entirely on landing information generated by the regulated industrial entity itself. Reliance on industry self-reported data, without independent verification, renders VMRC unable to confirm accuracy, evaluate compliance, or demonstrate fulfillment of its public trust and statutory duties.

VMRC also does not exercise independent oversight to verify compliance with key operational features of the industrial menhaden fishery, including bycatch. Although bycatch is reported as approximately one percent of the overall fishery, VMRC does not independently monitor, verify, or audit bycatch levels within the Chesapeake Bay. The issue is not the reported percentage, but the absence of independent verification sufficient to confirm its accuracy. Bycatch is a biological and ecological impact of the fishery, and absent independent verification, the regulatory record lacks reliable information to confirm whether reported bycatch levels are accurate or whether non-target species impacts are being adequately controlled.

Nor does the regulatory record demonstrate that VMRC evaluates cumulative menhaden removals from the Chesapeake Bay by combining industrial landings with harvest levels from the Bay's menhaden bait fishery. VMRC's approvals reference compliance with industrial landing limits, but there is no documented analysis showing that total Bay-wide forage extraction—across fisheries and over time—is examined or reconciled when authorizing continued industrial removals. Without such analysis, VMRC cannot demonstrate that it is accounting for cumulative impacts on the Bay's forage base.

Taken together, VMRC has adopted and continues to administer a regulation governing industrial use of Chesapeake Bay resources without obtaining Bay-specific ecological information, without independently verifying compliance with key regulatory requirements, and without demonstrating that cumulative menhaden removals from the Bay are evaluated. This absence of data collection, verification, and documented oversight is inconsistent with VMRC's statutory authority and public trust responsibilities under Va. Code § 28.2-204 and leaves the regulatory record insufficient to support continued authorization of industrial menhaden removal within the Chesapeake Bay.

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#### D. Failure to Demonstrate Consideration of Mandatory Factors Under Va. Code § 28.2-204.1

Va. Code § 28.2-204.1 provides that, in exercising its regulatory authority, "the Commission shall consider all factors relevant to the Commonwealth's fishery management policy, including but not limited to ... (5) impact on species and fisheries; and (6) abundance of the resource."

Consideration of these mandatory factors in the Chesapeake Bay context necessarily depends on Bay-specific information regarding menhaden abundance and Bay-specific analysis of the dependence of other species and fisheries on menhaden as forage.

In the absence of Bay-specific information sufficient to assess resource abundance and impacts on dependent species and fisheries, the regulatory record cannot demonstrate that the factors enumerated in § 28.2-204.1(5)–(6) have been considered with respect to industrial menhaden harvest in the Chesapeake Bay. Where the record does not demonstrate consideration of mandatory statutory factors, continued authorization of the activity lacks a legally sufficient basis under § 28.2-204.1.

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#### E. Failure to Demonstrate Compliance with Va. Code § 28.2-203

Va. Code § 28.2-203 provides that *“Any fishery management plan prepared, and any regulation promulgated to implement the plan, shall be consistent with the following standards for fishery conservation and management.”* The statute then enumerates mandatory standards that govern the Commission’s exercise of discretion.

#### *E1. Optimum yield and prevention of overfishing (§ 28.2-203(1))*

Section 28.2-203(1) requires that conservation and management measures prevent overfishing while achieving optimum yield, defined as the amount of harvest that provides the greatest overall benefit to the Commonwealth. In the Chesapeake Bay context, determining optimum yield necessarily depends on Bay-specific ecological conditions, including the Bay’s role as a nursery system and forage base for predator species. Absent Bay-specific abundance data and predator-dependence analysis, the regulatory record cannot demonstrate that the Chesapeake Bay menhaden cap reflects an optimum yield for the estuarine system rather than a historical landing figure untethered from current ecological conditions.

#### *E2. Best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available (§ 28.2-203(2))*

##### *E2a. Statutory Standard*

Virginia law requires that conservation and management measures be based upon the best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available. Va. Code § 28.2-203(2). This standard requires not only use of existing information, but use of information that is appropriate to the ecosystem being managed, and it requires agencies to seek out or generate better data when existing information is incomplete, outdated, or ill-suited to the management decision.

##### *E2b. Reliance on Ocean-Based Science for a Bay-Specific Fishery*

VMRC authorizes industrial menhaden removal in the Chesapeake Bay using scientific models and ecological reference points developed for the open Atlantic Ocean, specifically the 2022 ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment, not science developed for the Bay itself. The Chesapeake Bay is a confined, nursery-dominated estuarine ecosystem with ecological conditions that differ materially from the open ocean, including limited spatial buffering, concentrated forage demand, distinct predator assemblages, and different predator–prey dynamics. Scientific tools designed for coastwide ocean management do not evaluate conditions within this estuarine system.

##### *E2c. Failure to Develop Bay-Specific Ecological Information*

Additionally, VMRC has not sought to generate better data to address these known limitations. VMRC has not developed Bay-specific estimates of menhaden abundance, Bay-specific analysis of predator energetic needs or forage thresholds, or Bay-wide baseline data necessary to

evaluate the ecological sustainability of industrial menhaden removal within the Chesapeake Bay. As a result, management decisions affecting the Bay are made without any localized scientific foundation.

#### E2d. Failure to Protect Juveniles in a Known Nursery System

The Chesapeake Bay is the primary nursery for Atlantic menhaden, and precautionary protection of juvenile fish is therefore warranted as a matter of basic fisheries management. VMRC nonetheless authorizes industrial removals within this nursery without implementing protective measures for juveniles—such as seasonal or area restrictions—despite the Bay’s well-established nursery function and the known importance of juvenile menhaden to recruitment, forage availability, and ecosystem stability.

#### E2e. Reliance on Historical and Legacy Data Unrelated to Bay Ecology

Separate from its reliance on ocean-derived models, VMRC’s management decisions also rely on historical and legacy data derived from past industrial fishing activity. These long-standing landing figures and reference points were never designed to reflect Chesapeake Bay–specific ecological conditions, and in many cases trace back many decades and, in some instances, more than a century. Such data reflect past exploitation patterns and institutional inertia, not menhaden availability, predator demand, or ecosystem needs within the Chesapeake Bay. Reliance on these legacy benchmarks further disconnects management decisions from the ecological realities of the estuarine system.

#### E2f. Failure to Consider Relevant Ecosystem Indicators and Stressors

VMRC has also failed to consider readily available scientific and observational information documenting significant declines in Chesapeake Bay species that are heavily dependent on menhaden as forage. These include well-documented declines in osprey nesting success, the decline of the Chesapeake Bay striped bass fishery, the effective elimination of a historical bluefish fishery, and historically low blue crab abundance. While these conditions may have multiple contributing factors, they constitute relevant biological information concerning forage availability and ecosystem stress that must be evaluated when authorizing continued industrial removal of a foundational forage species.

In addition, VMRC has not evaluated the ecological effects of invasive blue catfish when determining menhaden removals. Blue catfish consume menhaden, particularly juveniles, and exert substantial predation pressure that alters food-web dynamics within the Chesapeake Bay. Failure to consider the combined effects of invasive predation and industrial forage extraction further undermines any claim that menhaden management decisions are based on the best scientific and biological information available.

## E2g. Exclusion of Known Biological Impacts

In addition, VMRC's scientific framework excludes known biological effects associated with industrial fishing activity within the Chesapeake Bay. One such effect is the incidental capture of non-target species. Bycatch is a biological and ecological impact of the fishery, and without independent, Bay-level bycatch data or verification, these impacts are excluded from the scientific basis of VMRC's management decisions.

## E2h. Conclusion

Taken together, VMRC's authorization of industrial menhaden removal in the Chesapeake Bay is based on science developed for a different ecosystem, on historical and legacy data that were never designed to reflect Chesapeake Bay-specific ecological conditions, and on a selective scientific record that excludes relevant ecosystem indicators and known biological impacts such as bycatch. VMRC has not sought to generate the localized, contemporary data necessary to correct these deficiencies. Accordingly, the regulatory record demonstrates that conservation and management measures are not based upon the best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available, as required by Va. Code § 28.2-203(2).

### *E3. Management of stocks as functional units (§ 28.2-203(3))*

Managing an individual stock as a functional unit, as contemplated by Va. Code § 28.2-203(3), requires that management measures reflect how the stock actually functions within the Commonwealth's waters. In the Chesapeake Bay, this means treating the Bay as a distinct estuarine subunit of the Atlantic menhaden stock, characterized by concentrated juvenile abundance, limited exchange with the open ocean, and intense localized forage demand by resident and migratory predators. Proper functional-unit management therefore requires Bay-specific estimates of menhaden abundance, evaluation of internal ecological demand within the Bay, and management limits derived from those conditions, rather than reliance on coastwide stock metrics alone. Absent such Bay-specific analysis, the regulatory framework does not demonstrate that menhaden are being managed as a functional unit within Virginia's territorial waters, as required by § 28.2-203(3).

### *E4. Fair and equitable treatment of user groups (§ 28.2-203(4))*

Section 28.2-203(4) requires that conservation and management measures not discriminate among user groups and that any allocation of fishing privileges be fair, equitable, and reasonably calculated to promote conservation. Virginia is the only Atlantic state that permits industrial reduction fishing within the Chesapeake Bay, resulting in concentrated access by a single operation to a shared public resource. The regulatory record does not demonstrate how this allocation has been evaluated for fairness, conservation benefit, or disproportionate impact

on other user groups, including recreational and commercial fisheries dependent on predator species.

*E5. Efficiency without exclusive economic allocation (§ 28.2-203(5))*

Va. Code § 28.2-203(5) requires that conservation and management measures promote efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources, but prohibits measures whose sole purpose is economic allocation. VMRC's continued reliance on old, ocean-based landing data that were never designed to reflect Chesapeake Bay ecological conditions to set and maintain industrial removal levels raises serious questions as to whether the current framework promotes efficient use of the Bay's forage base or instead preserves an established industrial allocation disconnected from present-day ecological realities.

VMRC has also failed to examine the economic impacts of continued industrial menhaden removal on other Bay-dependent economic activities, including the Chesapeake Bay menhaden bait fishery, recreational and charter fishing, and associated ancillary industries. Absent consideration of how industrial removals affect other lawful and dependent uses of the same forage resource, the regulatory record does not demonstrate that the current framework reflects efficient utilization of the resource rather than preferential preservation of a single industrial allocation.

*E6. Consideration of variability and contingencies (§ 28.2-203(6))*

Section 28.2-203(6) requires that management measures take into account variations and contingencies in fisheries, fishery resources, and catches. The Chesapeake Bay is a highly dynamic estuarine system subject to seasonal, climatic, and ecological variability. A static cap derived from historical averages does not reflect these contingencies, and the regulatory record does not demonstrate how variability in Bay conditions has been considered in continued authorization of industrial menhaden removals.

*E7. Minimization of unnecessary regulatory burdens (§ 28.2-203(7))*

Section 28.2-203(7) directs the Commission to minimize regulatory burden where practicable and consistent with conservation objectives. In doing so, however, it does not permit the Commission to forgo necessary ecological analysis in order to reduce administrative or industry burden. Absent Bay-specific ecological information sufficient to evaluate the effects of industrial menhaden removals, continued authorization of harvest cannot be justified as consistent with the conservation objectives required by § 28.2-203(7).

*Conclusion under § 28.2-203*

Taken together, the standards set forth in Va. Code § 28.2-203 require that conservation and management measures, including regulations implementing fishery management plans, be

consistent with the prevention of overfishing, achievement of optimum yield, management of stocks as functional units, equitable treatment of user groups, consideration of variability, and reliance on the best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available.

As applied to the Chesapeake Bay, satisfaction of these standards necessarily depends on Bay-specific information regarding menhaden abundance, ecological dependence by predator species and fisheries, and the operation of the Bay as a distinct estuarine system. In the absence of such Bay-specific information, the regulatory record does not demonstrate that continued authorization of industrial menhaden removals under the Chesapeake Bay cap is consistent with the standards mandated by § 28.2-203.

Where a regulation cannot be shown on the existing record to be consistent with the statutory standards governing fishery conservation and management, continued authorization of the regulated activity lacks a sufficient legal foundation. This deficiency supports the requested moratorium pending development and consideration of the information necessary to ensure compliance with § 28.2-203.

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## F. Potential Noncompliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act

Atlantic sturgeon, a federally listed endangered species present in the Chesapeake Bay, relies on available forage resources to support essential life functions. Industrial menhaden removal authorized by the Commonwealth remains subject to the federal Endangered Species Act, which prohibits any person or governmental entity from causing the take of a federally listed species through direct or indirect harm. See 16 U.S.C. § 1538(a)(1)(B).

“Take” under the Endangered Species Act includes harm through habitat modification or degradation that significantly impairs essential behavioral patterns, including feeding. Harm does not require direct capture or mortality. Authorizing large-scale removal of a major forage species without Bay-specific information regarding forage abundance or predator dependence creates a foreseeable risk of impairing essential feeding and survival behaviors necessary for the recovery of a listed species.

Menhaden are a keystone forage species, and large-scale removal disrupts Chesapeake Bay food webs. That disruption reduces energy transfer, alters predator behavior, and degrades ecosystem stability. Habitat harm does not require a direct predator–prey link; ecosystem degradation alone can impair listed species by reducing prey diversity, altering benthic conditions, and placing additional stress on recovery processes. Where endangered species such as Atlantic sturgeon rely on the Bay’s forage base and habitat functions, those indirect impacts are legally relevant and must be evaluated before fishing is authorized or continued.

## VI. REQUESTED RELIEF

The petitioner respectfully requests that VMRC:

1. Grant this petition by adopting a temporary moratorium on purse-seine reduction fishing for menhaden within the Chesapeake Bay and initiating rulemaking to amend 4 VAC 20-1270-35.
2. Maintain the moratorium until VMRC has affirmatively demonstrated, on the administrative record, compliance with all applicable statutory and public trust obligations, including that it has:
  - a. Determined Bay-specific menhaden abundance and Bay-specific ecological dependence, including the needs of predator species, juvenile life stages, and dependent fisheries within the Chesapeake Bay, consistent with Va. Code §§ 28.2-204.1 and 28.2-203(2);
  - b. Demonstrated, on the administrative record, compliance with the mandatory requirements of Va. Code § 28.2-204.1 by evaluating—*before authorizing industrial menhaden removal*—the impacts on species and fisheries, age structure, and the abundance of the resource;
  - c. Demonstrated compliance with all fishery management standards set forth in Va. Code § 28.2-203, including:
    - i. Prevention of overfishing while achieving optimum yield (§ 28.2-203(1));
    - ii. Reliance on the best scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available (§ 28.2-203(2));
    - iii. Management of individual and interrelated stocks as a unit, including forage-dependent predator species (§ 28.2-203(3));
    - iv. Fair, equitable, and non-discriminatory management measures that do not grant excessive fishing privileges (§ 28.2-203(4));
    - v. Promotion of efficient utilization of fishery resources without economic allocation as the sole purpose (§ 28.2-203(5));
    - vi. Consideration of variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches (§ 28.2-203(6)); and
    - vii. Minimization of unnecessary regulatory burdens while still achieving conservation objectives (§ 28.2-203(7));
  - d. Demonstrated compliance with Va. Code § 28.2-204 by obtaining or commissioning necessary fisheries data and implementing independent monitoring, verification, and enforcement mechanisms sufficient to ensure compliance with any future authorization of industrial menhaden removals, including verification of landings, bycatch, juvenile impacts, and cumulative removals across fisheries; and
  - e. Demonstrated satisfaction of interstate conservation responsibilities, including documented evaluation of cross-jurisdictional ecological and economic impacts within the Chesapeake Bay, consistent with Virginia's obligations under the

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact (Va. Code § 28.2-1000 through 28.2-1000.2).

The petitioner does **not** request a specific numerical quota and requests that no industrial reduction fishing resume until these conditions are satisfied.

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## VII. VMRC'S OBLIGATIONS

Under Va. Code § 2.2-4007, VMRC is required to consider this petition and issue a written decision stating its reasons for maintaining, amending, or repealing the challenged regulation.

As described in Sections V and VI, the existing regulatory framework authorizes industrial menhaden removals in the Chesapeake Bay without Bay-specific information regarding menhaden abundance or ecological dependence, and without independent mechanisms sufficient to verify compliance with the existing Bay cap.

In the absence of such information and oversight, the existing regulatory record does not identify a sufficient basis—grounded in Bay-specific abundance and ecological-dependence considerations—to justify continued authorization of the reduction fishery. Accordingly, any response to this petition must explain what information VMRC relies upon to support continued authorization and how that information satisfies its regulatory and public trust obligations.

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## VIII. CERTIFICATION

I certify that this petition is submitted in good faith pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-4007.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya O'Connor

Date: January 2, 2026

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

The following are 1266 comments received on the Regulatory Townhall Website during the period of 1/26/2026 through 2/17/2016.

Please note that Public Comment #240228 has been identified as an unauthorized or misattributed submission. The individual who submitted this comment incorrectly represented themselves as affiliated with the referenced company. As such, this comment does not reflect the views or official position of that company.

The company's official comments are included in this document and can be found on page 334.



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Agency

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Chapter

Pertaining to Atlantic Menhaden [4 VAC 20 - 1270]

1266 comments

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**Commenter:** Dale William Neal

1/26/26 11:21 am

**Pause menhaden reduction fishing in the bay**

Menhaden are a natural resource for all Virginians and users of the Chesapeake Bay. They are the primary keystone species that feeds almost all the other animals in the ecosystem. Their primary function should not be as an industrialized food pellet for Canadian fish farming. Canadian owned Omega Protein takes our resource at pennies on the dollar, lining their pockets at the expense of tens of thousands (not just a couple hundred) of Virginians who require a healthy abundant Chesapeake Bay to make a living.

Your mandate is to manage this resource for everyone. We ask that you manage it for abundance.

It is time to make sure that bay specific science tells us what is sustainable and what is not, before it is too late. [www.saveourmenhaden.org](http://www.saveourmenhaden.org)

CommentID: 238973 [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve Atkinson

1/26/26 11:41 am

**Agree with petition!**

There are multiple signs that menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay are in big trouble. They are the base of the food chain and osprey chicks are dying from starvation, our striped bass Which rely on menhaden have been in steep decline, The industry is having trouble meeting their quotas, and scientists have now acknowledged that the menhaden stock has been badly overstated. All of this calls for precautionary management to protect the vital ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay. Sadly, the industry continues to lobby against a menhaden study which makes me wonder, what are they afraid of? Will the VMRC board, which is dominated by commercial interest, do the right thing to protect the most important estuary in this country?

CommentID: **238974** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Breitbach

1/26/26 12:08 pm

**Save the Menhaden, the most valuable fish in the sea.**

Please, please, please save the bay

the bay is dependent upon Menhaden, we know this is an absolute.

we need to step up and not be bought off by the reduction industry.

CommentID: **238975** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Dobbs

1/26/26 12:09 pm

**Menhaden moratorium**

Most problems with the bay can be traced to over harvesting of menhaden. From crashes in the crab and stripped bass populations to even the water quality itself- they are filter feeders just like oysters. To allow harvesting at these levels is insane. Give the bay a chance to heal itself. Please ban all harvesting in the bay and for three miles offshore.

CommentID: **238976** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/26/26 12:12 pm

**I agree**

I agree.

CommentID: **238977** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jay Donlin

1/26/26 12:19 pm

### **Agree With this Petition**

Support the menhaden popluation in the Bay.

CommentID: **238978** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Spencer

1/26/26 12:33 pm

### **Restore Menhaden Population**

I support this petition

CommentID: **238979** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/26/26 12:56 pm

### **DOGE TIME!!**

Enough is enough.

Year after year of BS and zero accountability. An industry that caters to traitors CANADA. Stealing all Virginias bunker with ZERO oversight. Fake trips up north coming back empty, faking catch #s. A bi-catch clean up SHIP was built to cover their tracks of destruction. Stinky beaches from spills and overloaded ships.

Juvenile bunker is all that's left to rape.. no problem. Greediest set of lobbyists, and captains with a massive percentage of workers not from the United States of America.

Imagine making up your own seasons, locations and amount you can catch that is based on how well you PILLAGED the best years before with the maximum amount of ships and planes they can afford.

they need cameras on the Ships to witness all the bicatch of large predators including, striped bass, Cobia, drum and turtles.

Crooks need a real wake up call.

For years many warned them we were witnessing whole fisheries disappearing! Like croakers??? Gone , spots ..... gone... grey trout in the bay? History. We warned them they were starting to wipe out the Virginia bio mass which is the spawning grounds for them, and eventually work themselves out of a job.

They built more ships. Paid off more politicians, and made a joke out of the VMRC, with back door agreements (MOU's). They would not let the public speak as omega busssed in families to take every seat up. Hundreds of folks left early with no chance to speak. Filibusted by omegas goons.

This is a public resource not a private one. The public deserves a say not just the ones making \$\$ of it. Get ready to be doged, it's coming.

Here we are.

CommentID: **238980** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Germain

1/26/26 1:17 pm

**It is time for change**

Menhaden are in trouble and harvesting should be put on pause at the moment. These fish are crucial to all east coast species that depend on them.

CommentID: **238981** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/26/26 1:19 pm

**Omega must be stopped**

The rape of the Chesapeake by Omega Protein must end. Protect our fisheries and watermen.

CommentID: **238982** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/26/26 2:01 pm

**Not in the bay!**

There is absolutely zero reason for these vessels to be in the Chesapeake bay. The Bay acts as of sanctuary for breeding of at risk species also a food source to birds of prey. I live on the bay where Osprey use to roost on a yearly basis these birds are dying and or leaving for lack of food sources

the nests have disappeared. Constantly seeing dead oversized fish that would be illegal for a recreational fisherman to keep whenever these boats come through the bay due to bycatch. These boats need to stay in the ocean Maryland and other states that have bays already refuse them let Virginia as well.

CommentID: **238983** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Brooke

1/26/26 2:35 pm

### **Protect the menhaden!**

Menhaden are the "most important fish in the sea" as they serve as a food source for many other species of fish and birds throughout the Atlantic coastal region. In recent years we've seen an increase in bald eagles, osprey, blue heron and brown pelicans in the Chesapeake Bay especially as people move away from islands in the Chesapeake due to erosion and economic factors. While this is sad for the people who once called these islands home, it is great news for these species many of which were once in danger of extinction. All of these species depend on the menhaden as a critical food source. Please protect this keystone species for overfishing and save the bay.

CommentID: **238984** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gary Lowe

1/26/26 2:55 pm

### **Menhaden**

Please do everything possible to block the purse seine netting of thousands of tons every from Virginia's territorial waters. Complete ban with hopes they there is still time to recover .

CommentID: **238985** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Percy Blackburn

1/26/26 3:37 pm

### **Agree with this petition.**

Agree with this petition. It hurts nothing to put things on pause and devote adequate, quality time to gather facts and address the issue.

CommentID: **238987** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Rogers

1/26/26 3:42 pm

**Moratorium**

It is time for VMRC to do their job. Since a bill was passed four years ago to have VIMS conduct a study on the impact of industrial purse seine fishing in the Bay, Omega and their lobbyists lobbied against funding this legislation and the Youngkin administration and the General Assembly refused to direct any resources to this effort. In the meantime osprey populations have plummeted and rockfish season hardly exist. Put in place a moratorium on industrial purse seine fishing in the Bay and let science dictate the outcome **NOT POLITICS.**

CommentID: **238988** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Meriwether Payne, Seaside Ecotours LLC

1/26/26 4:00 pm

**I strongly agree with this petition!**

This should not be a political issue, determined by Donations made by Omega protein to Va. politicians! There have already been at least 1500 jobs affected in the commercial and Charter fishery in the bay Due to overfishing. That is way more than the 3 to 400 jobs that might be affected in Reedville. The omega business can operate just fine in the ocean while a study is completed. We should also be very concerned about not only fish species that feed on Menhaden but also Marine Mammals and (birds), especially our iconic osprey.

CommentID: **238989** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** james Hedeem

1/26/26 4:36 pm

**out of bay**

I Agree

CommentID: **238990** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Al McKegg

1/26/26 4:37 pm

**Strongly agree with this petition**

Omega Protein's depletion of the Bay's menhaden is utterly destroying the Bay's life balance. They must stop.

CommentID: **238991** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joseph S. Lupton, Jr

1/26/26 4:39 pm

**I strongly agree. STOP all menhaden fishing until a maximum continuous tonnage is determined.**

As along time member of the Hampton Yacht Club, I used to enjoy the striper tournament we had each fall. After the winner was determined, the fish were cleaned on the dock and cooked for all to enjoy. The past three or four seasons, the fishermen all came back empty handed. No stripers. My personal largest striper was a 38 inch fish that weighed around 25 pounds. Now there is no need to even go our looking for them. It is a real shame that our state even allows this fishery to keep doing this. Even worse that that is the fact that their product is sold to Canada.

CommentID: **238992** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joseph S. Lupton, Jr

1/26/26 4:40 pm

**I strongly agree. STOP all menhaden fishing until a maximum continuous tonnage is determined.**

As a long time member of the Hampton Yacht Club, I used to enjoy the striper tournament we had each fall. After the winner was determined, the fish were cleaned on the dock and cooked for all to enjoy. The past three or four seasons, the fishermen all came back empty handed. No stripers. My personal largest striper was a 38 inch fish that weighed around 25 pounds. Now there is no need to even go our looking for them. It is a real shame that our state even allows this fishery to keep doing this. Even worse that that is the fact that their product is sold to Canada.

CommentID: **238993** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/26/26 5:15 pm

**Menhaden Pause**

Please Pause Menhaden Fishing in the Chesapeake Bay in order to more fully study the menhaden population and ascertain the true importance

of this fish to our local environment. We deserve at least this. Would like to see it stop completely/  
but want it studied more  
in depth, at the very least...

CommentID: **238994** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Janet Hall, citizen

1/26/26 5:28 pm

### **Menhaden Fishing**

Stop Menhaden Fishing please

CommentID: **238995** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George

1/26/26 6:17 pm

### **Just freaking stop.... you are killing the bay**

There is NO reason on earth that those big fish factories should be in the bay. Get rid of them!

CommentID: **238996** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John

1/26/26 6:48 pm

### **Enact a moratorium as soon as possible**

Please place a moratorium on menhaden fishing until the population can rebound to significant numbers

CommentID: **238997** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alfred Minio

1/26/26 8:06 pm

### **Ban manhaden fishing.**

In my lifetime I have seen the decline of many species of game fish that I believe is directly related to purse seine netting.

CommentID: **238998** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Craig Freeman

1/26/26 8:21 pm

### **Save the Menhaden**

I have been fishing the Chesapeake Bay since 1986. The last 15 years a charter captain and commercial hook and line fisherman. I'm on the water 5-6 days a week from May-September and 2-3 days a week the rest of the time. I also serve on several boards, one of which is the MMAC and I'm chair of the ASMFC multi species AP.

Over the past 12 years the fishing in the Chesapeake Bay has declined significantly. Doesn't matter the species, the fishing is dismal. From spot and croaker to flounder and cobia every category is way down. All one has to do is look at the VMRC citation data over the last 15 years and one can see the decline of a once great fishery.

Why look at citation data? It is an indicator of a fish population in trouble. When the larger fish start declining the population is declining. All the species are in decline. And one of the major factors is lack of menhaden(bait).

The menhaden that were in the bay this summer were some of the poorest in history. There was a the Bunker Fleet out of Deltaville didn't fish in the bay but a select number of days this past summer, and that's because the numbers and size of Menhaden were not what they wanted.

It is time for a moratorium, purse seine ban, or quota ban on menhaden in state waters. A moratorium would be ideal, but if not a moratorium, then ban the use of purse seines in Va waters. If that is not doable then make a quota decision. Something like if you have over 10tons of menhaden quota you cannot fish in VA state waters.

Any of those options would be sufficient to allow the overfished menhaden population to increase. With an increase in the menhaden population all fish species and some bird species will flourish once again.

Please don't sit back and do nothing. Pick one the options mentioned above or do something else, but please do something about our diminished fishing conditions.

Sincerely,

Capt. Craig Freeman

CommentID: **238999** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carrie

1/26/26 8:29 pm

**Ban menhaden**

Ban commercial fisherman... the depletion of menhaden has the ecosystem screwed up.

CommentID: **239000** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karen Royer

1/26/26 9:44 pm

**Ban Omega - protect menhaden!!!**

It is beyond stupid to let Omega Protein strip a resource that belongs to everyone just because they can. The menhaden are the crucial link in the food chain for so many of the Bay's wildlife and we let a greedy Canadian company ruin the Bay's balance for profit??? Throw out every single sleazy politician who supports Omega over our precious and fragile Bay!!!!

CommentID: **239001** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Suzanne LaPierre

1/26/26 11:22 pm

**Save the fish**

Please pause Menhaden purse-seine fishing in the Chesapeake. It's important to protect the ecology of our state. - A 32 year resident of Virginia.

CommentID: **239002** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris

1/27/26 8:31 am

**Menhaden pause**

The VMRC should pause the menhaden industry inside the Chesapeake Bay. Waters east of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnel and offshore should be regulated on menhaden fishing. The waters

of the Chesapeake Bay west/ north of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge tunnels should have a no fishing ban for menhaden for the foreseeable future!

CommentID: **239003** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shelley

1/27/26 8:34 am

### **Methadone over fishing**

Please be proactive in saving and supporting our natural resources for future generations and stop the over fishing in our waterways , which is destroying populations of Osprey and other wildlife that depends on this resource. NOW is the time before it is to late!

CommentID: **239004** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lynn Williams

1/27/26 9:00 am

### **Stop overfishing the bay**

I have seen a drastic decrease in the number of schoolie rock in bayside creeks on the ESVA. I have also seen several large fish kills wash into Craddock Creek in the last 5 years. Pretending that the Menhaden population is a never ending resource is not responsible management of our fragile ecosystem.

CommentID: **239005** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Christopher Malgee

1/27/26 9:53 am

### **Protect the Bay and its inhabitants**

The VMRC has a duty to protect Virginia's largest resource, the Chesapeake Bay, and has repeatedly failed to do so when there was an opportunity to determine the extent of the destruction caused by reduction-fishing of menhaden within the Bay. We need scientific baselines for menhaden populations in the Bay, and what seems obvious to watermen throughout the region needs to be studied. Until the agency responsible for the safekeeping of the Bay and its fish has any scientific data on populations and impacts, we demand a stop to reduction fishing until clear evidence of its sustainability has been provided.

CommentID: **239006** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/27/26 10:41 am

**pause Menhaden purse-seine fishing in the Chesapeake**

Stop overfishing menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay

CommentID: **239007** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/27/26 11:53 am

**no bunker**

fish in li sound no bunker at all for 3 years keep up the bad work

CommentID: **239008** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Mounie

1/27/26 12:13 pm

**Menhaden fishing in Chesapeake bay**

Eliminate menhaden factory ships in the bay! Not sustainable

CommentID: **239009** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Greg Nevi

1/27/26 12:18 pm

**Menhaden**

The quotas are **■**

CommentID: **239010** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paul Anderson

1/27/26 12:38 pm

**Stop menhaden netting in and near the Bay**

Please stop them fishing menhaden in the bay and anywhere near the entrance to the bay. This is an important resource that belongs to all of us, not to Omega. If there is insufficient information to make sensible decisions, we should stop the netting until we do have information about how this fishery affects the Bay ecosystem.

CommentID: **239012** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ed Pacheco

1/27/26 12:39 pm

**You Say What!**

# Save the Bay

## A Legacy for Future Generations

Here's what our grandchildren will be telling their children:

“There was a time when you could catch your dinner from the waters of the bay. I can remember when the Osprey would make nests and raise their young, American Bald Eagles would soar high in the clear blue sky, and I would always see Loggerhead Turtles bobbing their heads above the water. Blue crab was so abundant we could have a crab feast each weekend with our family.”

I'm not sure how this all happened, but I remember how productive the bay was. Everything is now gone. Where did they all go? Why did they leave the bay? How can we bring back the menhaden, croaker, spot, sea trout, striped bass, redfish, blue crab—all the wildlife? Will this be written in our history books like the carrier pigeon and American bison and so many others?

Why has this happened?

The answer, Ecosystem, the consequences became increasingly apparent. The decline in menhaden populations disrupted the delicate balance of marine life, impacting not only commercial fisheries but also on the health of the entire bay. It is clear now that sustainable management practices are essential to restore and preserve this vital resource for future generations.

But hope is not lost. By recognizing the mistakes of the past, we can work together to restore the bay. Protecting wetlands, reducing pollution, and supporting sustainable fishing can help bring back the creatures that once thrived here. With effort and care, your generation and those to come can once again witness the beauty and abundance of the bay—ensuring that these stories are not just memories, but a promise for the future.

There is hope.

CommentID: **239013** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** J. Wilson Enochs III

1/27/26 12:55 pm

### **Menhaden**

The reduction fishery is destroying menhaden stocks in the Chesapeake Bay. Please stop this practice, menhaden are a primary link in the food chain for many fish and birds. I agree with this petition, science should be applied and harvest controlled to the benefit of all of Virginia's citizens, not just a wealthy few.

CommentID: **239014** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** charles jack

1/27/26 1:04 pm

### **menhaden**

stop menhaden purse seine fishing in Virginia waters

CommentID: **239015** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/27/26 1:15 pm

### **Pause Menhaden fishing**

It's wrong!!!

CommentID: **239016** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert S. Tulloss

1/27/26 1:28 pm

### **Menhaden fishery**

I agree with this petition. The menhaden fishery is vitally important to the health and wellbeing of the Chesapeake Bay and the surrounding citizens. All reasonable steps should be employed, using objective, scientifically based decisions for the good of all affected.

CommentID: **239017** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Frederick Menage, Jr

1/27/26 2:08 pm

### **STOP NETTING!**

Please stop the netting of fish in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239018** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Godsey

1/27/26 2:47 pm

### **Eliminate Menhaden Catching in the Chesapeake Bay**

I have been fishing in the Bay for over 50 years. As a kid, the schools of menhaden on my little creek covered the entire creek in the summer. Now I see one or no schools of menhaden most of the summer. We must completely stop commercial fishing for menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239019** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George Brickley

1/27/26 3:03 pm

### **Menhaden fishing in the bay**

I have been fishing in the bay for 12 years now. The last two years there have been very Difficult for recreational fisherman. I have never seen so few recreational boats on the water as this year. Very few days of catching.

rockfish have been entering the Bay later and later And in smaller numbers.

there are notably, fewer birds on the water.

I don't think it takes an environmental scientist to link causation to lack of bait.

I believe the Chesapeake Bay is the only estuary in the country that allows harvesting of Menhaden?

I support omega's right to fish the ocean. NOT the bay.

let's use some common sense here.

CommentID: **239020** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jack Strickland

1/27/26 3:34 pm

### **I agree with this petition**

I've been fishing the Chesapeake bay for over 30 years and feel the menhaden fish need to be protected from overfishing. Every other state bans netting Menhaden in their bays, why not Virginia?

I understand it would cost more for the fish oil companies to harvest menhaden in the open ocean but that cost should be passed on to the fish oil users, not on our Chesapeake bay fishery.

Its time for Virginia to step up and protect our natural resources.

CommentID: **239021** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zach Williamson

1/27/26 5:13 pm

### **I agree**

I agree.

CommentID: **239022** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike

1/27/26 5:27 pm

### **I agree with petition**

Save the Bay- stop menhaden fishing until the science research is done then let the facts dictate catch limits.

CommentID: **239023** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brant East

1/27/26 5:34 pm

### **Save our fishery**

Commercial overfishing has been killing our fishery for decades! Tune to take a stand.

CommentID: **239024** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kevin Smith

1/27/26 6:11 pm

### **Stopping Menhaden Reduction Fishing in VA Waters**

This needs to stop to help protect the Chesapeake Bay, our fisheries, mammals and birds.

CommentID: **239025** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charlie P

1/27/26 8:25 pm

### **In support of pause**

Stop omega from removing the main forage species in the bay. We did it to save the bluefin, time to save the striped bass too.

CommentID: **239026** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/27/26 8:55 pm

### **I agree with this petition!**

My name is Mildred Reyes-Ritter, and I am a recreational fisherwoman on Virginia's Eastern Shore and Chesapeake Bay. I am submitting this comment out of deep concern for the health of our Bay's ecosystem and the future of the fisheries that so many local families depend on.

Menhaden are a critical forage species that support striped bass, bluefish, red drum, ospreys, and the entire food web of the Chesapeake Bay. Yet Virginia continues to allow large-scale purse-seine reduction fishing in the Bay without adequate Bay-specific science to show that this practice is safe for the ecosystem.

As someone who spends time on the water, I see warning signs firsthand: fewer and smaller schools of menhaden, stressed predator species, and declining fishing opportunities for everyday Virginians. When the forage base collapses, the entire system suffers including local watermen, recreational anglers, small businesses, and families who rely on a healthy Bay for food and income.

Pausing menhaden reduction fishing in the Chesapeake Bay until proper scientific studies are completed is a reasonable, precautionary, and responsible step. Decisions about our natural resources should be based on sound science and long-term sustainability, not short-term economic pressure.

I strongly support this petition and urge the Commonwealth to protect the Chesapeake Bay before the damage becomes irreversible.

Thank you for considering my comment.

CommentID: **239027** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charles Strong

1/27/26 9:50 pm

### **Stop menhaden fishing in the bay**

I have live in the bay all of my life and fished it just as long as you can see the difference in the bay in regards to predator fish. The menhaden are not there and the fish that feed on them are leaving the bay or being killed by the boats catching the menhaden. You would not believe how many times a year the shore lines are full of dead drum and other fish from the menhaden fleet. Also birds of prey are disappearing on the shore lines. Why? Maybe because they have nothing to eat as well. Stop the menhaden fishing in the bay and up to the three mile line of the shores in the ocean. Save the bay and your local fisherman over the big company that does nothing for the state.

CommentID: **239028** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jim Tolson

1/27/26 9:59 pm

### **Stop menhaden by Omega in Chesapeake Bay and put limits on them along east coast**

Stop menhaden by Omega in Chesapeake Bay and put strick limits on them along east coast

CommentID: **239029** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Laura Mae

1/28/26 4:58 am

### **Yes, establish a moratorium on Menhaden reduction fishing in all Virginia waters**

Yes, please “establish a moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden reduction fishing” and then \*ban\* Menhaden purse-seine fishing in \*all Virginia waters.\* The ecology of our Chesapeake Bay is suffering. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. It is a major ecological, economic, and cultural resource, providing habitat for over 300 species of fish, shellfish, and crabs. These resources belongs to 8.6 million Virginia’s. Please stop prioritizing one small company, Omega Protein, over the rest of us.

Virginia is the only state on the East Coast that permits industrial-scale purse seine reduction fishing for Atlantic menhaden in its state waters. Why have other US East Coast states and federal managers implemented bans? It has been to address overfishing, protect declining fish stocks, and prevent damage to marine ecosystems.

You are the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC). You are responsible for managing and protecting Virginia's tidal habitats (wetlands, dunes, beaches), regulating commercial and recreational saltwater fishing and enforcing conservation laws - to ensure sustainable use for the public good.

For sustainable use for the public good, please establish a moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden reduction fishing” and then \*ban\* Menhaden purse-seine fishing in \*all Virginia waters.\*

- - - - -

2025 Sept: <https://www.cbf.org/news/virginians-overwhelmingly-back-reforming-industrial-menhaden-fishery-amid-troubling-signs/> “An overwhelming 92 percent of Virginia voters believe the state should leave more menhaden in the Bay, according to a poll of 600 registered Virginia voters conducted by a pair of research firms—one Republican and one Democrat—between July 30 and Aug. 5.

Menhaden in Virginia’s portion of the Chesapeake Bay are the target of Omega Protein, a subsidiary of Canadian corporation Cooke, Inc., and its partner Ocean Harvesters. In what is called a reduction fishery, this industry uses spotter planes, enormous purse seine nets, and vacuum hoses to harvest more than 100 million pounds of menhaden annually from Virginia’s Bay waters.

Longstanding concerns about the appropriate size of a menhaden fishery in Chesapeake Bay are gaining attention amid reports of plummeting menhaden catches by Maryland watermen and small-scale Virginia fishermen, as well as unprecedented levels of starving osprey chicks. Industry efforts to block science and data on Chesapeake Bay menhaden has left Virginia without enough information to effectively manage the fishery.

“Virginians resoundingly want more menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay, and overwhelmingly back every single policy we tested for stricter management of the Bay’s menhaden fishery,” said Lori Weigel, a pollster with the Republican research firm New Bridge Strategy.

“We almost never see this kind of consensus across party, age, and geography,” said Miranda Everitt, a pollster with the Democratic research firm FM3.”

CommentID: **239031** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Odom

1/28/26 6:31 am

### **Menhaden must be viewed in relationship to other species dependent on them for survival**

Look how many east coast states allow menhaden fishing in their bays and waters. Is Virginia the only one that allows their waters to be stripped of menhaden?

Stripped Bass used to be plentiful in the southern Chesapeake Bay, but no longer. Ospreys used to be plentiful in and around Chesapeake Bay, but no longer. Scientific studies show a direct relationship between those species and the lack of menhaden in the Bay.

Virginia has a responsibility to properly manage it's natural resources, but it appears greed has become more important. It's time to step up and protect our natural resources and a necessary source of food for those resources.

CommentID: **239032** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith Koontz

1/28/26 7:21 am

### **Corporate greed**

Stop destroying the Chesapeake Bay fish population at the expense of profits going to out of state companies. You are destroying the recreational fishing industry which provides a lot of income to the state..

CommentID: **239033** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Beth Cardwell

1/28/26 8:21 am

### **Expand menhaden moratorium**

I support this petition and ask that you expand the moratorium to include the Chesapeake Bay and all Virginia coastal waters. It would be shame for Omega to reposition their ships to scoop up the menhaden at the entrance to the bay. I boat and fish in Mathews County and have witnessed the loss of ospreys. We had maybe one bird on Stutts Creek and a couple empty nests. This is very

unusual. It has become difficult to catch rockfish. Local crabbers are unable to get bait for their crabpots. Protecting menhaden in Virginia is essential to the health and economy of the Bay!

CommentID: **239034** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/28/26 8:24 am

**Menhaden petition supporter**

I agree

CommentID: **239035** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kate Ahnstrom, Artemis Sportswomen

1/28/26 8:33 am

**Menhaden Moratorium**

The dollars invested by Cooke/Omega is evidence enough of corporate greed and disregard for preservation of the delicate ecosystem balance in the bay. The bribe money is reaching far and wide and perverting our public servants. There must be regulations enacted immediately to save the bay and keep Cooke/Omega from further destroying Virginia waters and wildlife!

CommentID: **239036** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/28/26 8:40 am

**Stop overfishing menhaden**

Osprey populations are down. They rely on menhaden. We need to stop the corporate greed and overfishing which is harming our environment.

CommentID: **239037** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karen Fischer

1/28/26 10:29 am

**Vote no**

Stop taking the feeder fish out! It hurt all fisherman! For fish don't come where there is nothing for them to eat! You are destroying the bay!

CommentID: **239038** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Lesniczak

1/28/26 10:38 am

**Stop the overfishing of Menhaden in all waters**

Stop the over fishing of Menhaden in all waters.

CommentID: **239039** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Billy

1/28/26 10:43 am

**I agree**

I agree with this petition

CommentID: **239040** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** VABRDR

1/28/26 10:48 am

**Please vote against overfishing**

Because they are producing a product that quickly goes rancid thus not even beneficial for the health of humans. At the same time endangering the wildlife and ecosystems, no wins here trading destruction for money.

CommentID: **239041** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike May

1/28/26 11:03 am

**Support for this petition and closure of menhaden harvest in the Chesapeake Bay**

There is something seriously wrong in the bay fishery. I believe it is the result of overfishing of menhaden. All other species are tightly regulated. Menhaden need the same. Close the bay to menhaden harvest and omega can still fish in the ocean . The jobs will still be there given the infrastructure of reedville. I support this petition and rational regulation.

CommentID: **239042** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lea

1/28/26 11:32 am

**Sustainability**

This is a big word that has lots of meaning depending on where you sit. I am in favor of the shutdown of fishing for as long as needed for the population to have a chance to repopulate and feed the other east coast creatures that feed on this fish. Himans do not in all honesty need this fish. Leave it alone and stop the harvesting.

CommentID: **239043** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Joe S.

1/28/26 11:55 am

**Our osprey chicks are starving and dying.**

I live on a creek near Deale, Maryland. We're right on the Bay. Every summer, there are 3 osprey platforms with active nests on the creek. The nesting platform behind my house has had a nesting pair for 25 years. Usually, 2 or sometimes 3, chicks make it to adulthood on that platform. However, for the last 3 years, none of the chicks have survived in any of the nests on the creek. Zero. The mother birds constantly call for the fathers to bring fish to feed the chicks and they are unable to. The mothers have a very distinctive call when they want food for the chicks. It's a constant cry for food. I've heard reports from neighbors that they've seen ospreys resorting to hunting birds, mammals and snakes on their property. This a relatively new phenomenon and it's very sad. I don't know if the menhaden fishing situation in VA is to blame. Maybe it is. What I do know, is what I observe. The osprey chicks are starving and dying. If it is over fishing, we need some limits that everyone can live with. I think some common sense here is needed before its too late. Thank you.

PS - how about augmenting the Menhaden with invasive blue catfish? There's no shortage of those beasts. They eat everything they can swallow and ospreys don't often catch them since they're bottom feeders and usually too large and too deep.

CommentID: **239044** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Greg B

1/28/26 12:03 pm

**More science needed!**

Forget greed and politics and let the experts study and advise.

CommentID: **239045** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert McLaughlin

1/28/26 12:03 pm

### **Agree with the petition!**

It has become painfully obvious that the Chesapeake Bays menhaden fishery has been overfished. There is plenty of evidence to support this including the industries own catch data. The wishes of the residents of Virginia should have priority and much more weight than a single corporation with massive lobbying power. The menhaden fishery is the property of the residents of Virginia! The residents have clearly stated thier desire to leave menhaden in the bay (recentCBF survey).

CommentID: **239046** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Eric Olson

1/28/26 12:43 pm

### **Menhaden Purse Seien Netting Moritorium**

I am in support of a Virginia Moratorium on Menhaden purse seine fishing in the Bay. I know it may affect people's lively hood, however that cost must be evaluated against the cost of loss of chedpeaks bay ecosystem food chain that supports crabbing, and fishing industry both commercial and recreational. Provisions could be made to support transition of menhaden industry to emerging alternative forms of fishery such as shrimp fishery and take pressure off of tjd menhaden entering tje bay.

Sincerely,

Eric W. Olson

AuggieKat - Deale Md.

CommentID: **239047** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/28/26 1:23 pm

### **Long time coming**

The menhaden industry has decimated the migratory striped bass fishery in the Chesapeake Bay, has caused a decline in osprey populations, and trends suggest there could be several other negative effects on the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is a natural, cultural, and environmental heritage resource that should be held in tact for equitable use, not pillaged for the gain of foreign business.

CommentID: **239049** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/28/26 2:39 pm

### Support the petition

Ospreys in our area (Rappahannock River and Totuskey Creek) seem to be unsuccessful in nesting over the past three years. It's not hard to imagine that reduction fishing could be responsible. I support unbiased research to determine what is causing this possible decline. Please respect the petition

CommentID: **239051** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carolyn O'Neal

1/28/26 2:43 pm

### Save the Chesapeake Bay

I support the moratorium on Menhaden fishing in Virginia. Please give this essential fish a chance to rebuild their population. The Chesapeake Bay is too important to let overfishing destroy it.

Thank you!

CommentID: **239052** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Concerned Virginian

1/28/26 3:31 pm

### Omega Protein

According to the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP), Omega Protein has contributed over 1.1 million dollars to both Virginia Democrat and Republican politicians, with Governor Spanberger's Inaugural Committee recently receiving 50K. This money is given so that they may be granted favor by our elected politicians. As a publicly traded company, Omega's main concern is their shareholders, and not the health of the bay or the people of Virginia and Maryland. The Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery Cap limits the harvest of menhaden within the Bay to 51,000

metric tons annually, most of which is taken by Omega and its contractors. These fish are key component in the health of the bay, and the over fishing has hurt predators like rockfish and ospreys. As filter feeders, menhaden also play a large role in bay water quality. It is time our elected politicians stand up for Virginia and not those who line their pockets with money.

See <https://www.vpap.org/donors/137690-omega-protein/> for information on the politicians Omega gives money.

CommentID: **239053** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** 300 days a year

1/28/26 4:05 pm

### menhaden

Hello - I think I speak for many anglers and voters when I petition you to limit menhaden and bycatch pound limits in the Chesapeake bay and surrounding waters. This is for several reasons. As a fisherman who is on the water, all over VA, virtually daily, I think I am expert on this subject matter and have a current pulse on the situation.

Please consider the following state of affairs, and mind you what follows is not really my opinion:

1) rockfish population with vintage less than 6 years is in critical shape due to a five fold increase in menhaden take from companies like Omega. Your solution to this is to limit rockfish catches and slots but not seriously limit the supply of what they eat. Its a stupid policy, and who suffers this outcome?: recreational and commercial anglers up and down the east coast who have to abide by other onerous regulations that are barely harmonized with other states (and their head boats), as well as the ridiculous stipulations of the all encompassing Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. If nothing is going to be done about the bottom of the food chain, repeal the Act; for without a stable menhaden population, there.....is....no.....bay.....to.....preserve!

2) The seatrout and red drum population has been, in a word, nonexistent, for at least 2 years. I don't know a single person, myself included, that has taken ANY upper slot (meaning ZERO) of either species in two years (in bay adjacent and not brackish tributaries)! I target these species, and I know I haven't caught them all, so where the heck are they? I know; they starved, and the current ecosystem cannot support more.

3) The current rule makers and lobbyists have convinced voters that saving a few jobs in Reedville, on behalf of a Canadian company, is a wise decision. I smell a rotten fish (pun intended) and I for one would be in full support of the money trail between Omega and the politicians in favor of the ongoing menhaden policy be investigated.

4) Seasoned watermen seem to be public enemy number one in this debate. Its atrocious, and I am skeptical that disadvantaging people who live off the land and who are self sufficient (and are largely male, and vote the majority republican) isn't a large part of this. Spoiler alert, it is. And the sooner the fishery policy is stabilized by people who know this situation like the back of their hands (through good old time on the water) as opposed to some bureaucrat who may never have even seen the Chesapeake Bay, nothing is going to change. Sadly.

Thus I welcome the opportunity to weigh in, and vent my own frustrations, regarding too few productive days at the expense of people that govern things like the health of the Bay in general and the menhaden fishery in particular and the rest of us have to suffer the consequences.

CommentID: **239054** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Buklad

1/28/26 7:00 pm

### **and there is bad faith**

I live on Gwynn's Island, and during the deep winter months of the pandemic, the blue fleet (two boats) was bottom trawling in shallow water usually fished by our natural oyster patent tongers. For a week thereafter the beaches were littered with bottom growth, the coral-type plants, dead shell fish and dead fish. There were waters they were not allowed to be in - we all thought. I supported their line but certainly no longer do. Only one school of menhaden minnows cam by Gwynn, all summer of this year. One osprey tried, but could not catch them, and gave up. Their catch each day is bad faith and deception.

CommentID: **239055** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** MARK ANDERSON

1/28/26 7:04 pm

### **Menhaden stock decline**

I have been fishing Long Island Sound for the past 43 years and have witnessed the ups and downs of the Menhaden stock during this time. Early on during this period the menhaden population was plentiful. Then came the "Bunker (Menhaden) Boats" that decimated the population into non-existence. Rightfully these trawlers were banned form Long Island Sound, and the Menhaden population rebounded to great abundance (fueled by the Menhaden from southern waters). Enter Omega Protein! During the past 5 years the Menhaden population has steadily declined to the lowest number of fish in the last decade. It is not a coincidence that Omega spent a significant portion of the spring season in New York waters, due to lack of fish to the south. If gone unchecked, it is only a matter of time that the Menhaden population on the East Coast will cease to

exist. Politicians need to realize this will significantly impact many of their constituents negatively, and they will remember when it comes to voting. Recreational fisherman contribute millions of dollars to local economies in the form of payments to marinas, boat sales and repairs, gas taxes, mechanics, tackle shops, charter boats, hotels, and many other tourism connected business. The majority of these fisherman are targeting fish that rely on the Menhaden to survive! This is all being jeopardized due to the lack of regulation of one company, Omega Protein! I am sure names will be named if the collapse of Menhaden causes these businesses to suffer or go out of existence!!!

CommentID: **239056** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Will Gillen

1/28/26 7:45 pm

### **Save the Bay!**

Menhaden overfishing has been an issue in our Virginia waters for several years and something must change! Future generations will never be able to experience the great fishing in our waters that I grew up on if there's nothing left to catch. It has been scientifically proven that many of our native and migratory species feed off of the menhaden. Limits need to be put into place for these commercial vessels such as a reduced quota, no spotter planes or pushing the vessels offshore!

CommentID: **239057** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenneth

1/28/26 8:38 pm

### **More conservation needed right away**

The over fishing of menhaden is hurting local commercial fishing companies like the Davenports on Dymer Creek.

I live in the area and observwd diminishing Osprey population around Fleets Bay due very few Menhaden.in this area.

After 2 years of unproductive recreational fishing, I have decided to sell my boat to lack of fish and unfortunately we not be teaching my grandkids the joy I experience while fishing on the Chesapeake.

The state of Virginia needs to outlaw industrial purse seine fishing.

CommentID: **239058** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chad Dameron

1/29/26 4:19 am

**I do not support**

The menhaden are thriving in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239061** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Stephen Saniewski

1/29/26 6:51 am

**Headed for disaster**

I am strongly in support of this measure. Having spent in excess of 50 years fishing along the Mid Atlantic coast it is painfully obvious that the current stocks of menhaden are in serious decline and without intervention are headed towards a future as a no longer sustainable fishery. Over the last 3 years the average size of menhaden has plummeted with full size bunker essentially unavailable, and I cannot understand the justification of allowing a Canadian company (Omega Protein) to exploit our resources to this level. This is an opportunity for the Virginia Legislature to follow the will of their constituents and at the same time do what is right for the health of the bay. Please put an end to the reduction fishery in the bay.

CommentID: **239062** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bob Mandigo

1/29/26 7:38 am

**I agree**

Establish a moratorium on industrial menhaden harvesting in Virginia until such time as a valid scientific study is completed on the ecological reference points AND shows the available annual sustainable harvest.

CommentID: **239063** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** S Kovacic

1/29/26 8:10 am

**Save our fishery**

This needs to end. Ban omega. And elect new officials

CommentID: **239064** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Al Taylor

1/29/26 10:03 am

**Pause the fishery**

Please pause the fishery to give fish stocks and other life time to recover. You are taking too much, and the fish eating birds are suffering, not to mention others.

CommentID: **239065** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve S

1/29/26 11:52 am

**Strongly agree**

The conditions presented in the petition are common sense for fisheries, especially one such as menhaden which are a vital food source for Chesapeake Bay fisheries. And it should be noted that many of the petitions conditions are apparently required by law. Additionally, foreign companies should not be allowed to deplete this important component of our fishery's food web. We have nothing to gain by allowing it and much to lose.

CommentID: **239066** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** james mcconnell

1/29/26 12:52 pm

**I support this petition**

This action makes the most economic sense for all the recreational & commercial users of the Chesapeake Bay and will impact those same groups all up and down the eastern seaboard. We must place the value of menhaden above the purse seine harvesters - menhaden are worth more in place!

CommentID: **239067** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bob Schepker

1/29/26 1:20 pm

### **i support this petition**

I support this petition. Save the bay.

CommentID: **239068** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Onesty Lady Cove LLC (Have a commercial card and leased oyster ground

1/29/26 1:23 pm

### **Miss the Osprey**

I live on the Mobjack, mouth of Rowe Creek, Severn River. Have lived here for over 25 years. Always eagerly anticipate the return of the Osprey. Track it, usually between March 7th and 11th. Used to have lots of these beautiful birds over my house. The last several years they have declined to the point that last year we had none. This is a crime and a sin against nature.

Also, I no longer have peanut bunker in my cove. Is it possible that Menhaden return to the the same place where they were hatched and all of the Mobjack stock has been removed? We don't know by your very admission.

What's wrong with a three year moratorium so we can see and track any positive changes?

Is it true that one of the captain's of these purse seine vessels is our Congressman Whitman's son? Is it true that this company pays everyone of our state legislatures so that they can keep this damaging practice going?

I ask you to do the right, correct thing that you know is true. Most of the workers at the reduction plant are seasonal workers that receive unemployment. Think of the value in tax dollars that Factory Point would bring to the county if it was redeveloped. How much monies do the recreational fisherman spend? 10 years ago during Rockfish season you could turn in a circle and count 200 boats. How much were they worth in taxes. They are gone, no Rockfish left.

Make the correct moral and economic decision, PLEASE.

David Onesty

CommentID: **239069** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Spencer Lumpkin

1/29/26 2:09 pm

### **The Bay comes first**

PLEASE stop menhaden fishing until much smaller and more realistic quotas can be studied and implemented. The bay is already under enough stress without a ruthless commercial fishery wreaking havoc.

CommentID: **239070** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** JD Haschert

1/29/26 2:25 pm

### **Foundational Species must be protected**

As a life-long resident of the Eastern Shore and an avid recreational angler in both the Virginia and Maryland portions of the Chesapeake, I've seen firsthand the decline of menhaden numbers in the bay and its impacts. There are fewer predator fish, fewer Osprey on my creek every year, and less frequent visits from Bald Eagles in the winter. Please act to protect the menhaden to help restore balance to the bay.

CommentID: **239071** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Evan D

1/29/26 2:36 pm

### **Pause Menhaden Reduction Fishery**

I support this petition. It is critical we put our natural resources first. The reduction fishery is unsustainable and having wide reaching negative impacts on the bay ecosystem.

CommentID: **239072** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Pat

1/29/26 2:42 pm

### **Saving menhaden**

I support saving osprey by stopping over fishing menhaden!

CommentID: **239073** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kyle Franko

1/29/26 2:44 pm

**Keep Omega 3 miles out**

All that needs to happen is make it somewhere Omega bunker fleet is not allowed within 3 miles of the barrier islands. I'm a young watermen grew up fishing fishing in the bay is pretty good until the blue boat show up once they show up they catch everything in the bay. Nothing gets out of their nets To the people that Think they let fish go once it's in their circle and they suck it up with that pump it dies anyway they kill a lot of buy catch. Also they think they own the water one of my buddies. He was out there sport fishing he was anchored before the bunker boat got there and the bunker boat circled him while he was anchored and caught my buddy inside of his set. He still has a video of that and they make all the small water men lose more gear than anything what I could catch in my lifetime even if I loaded the boat every time wouldn't even touch one percent of their quota if they want to save the bay just make it somewhere where the bunker fleet are not allowed within 3 miles of the barrier Islands

CommentID: **239074** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Charles Breckenridge

1/29/26 5:20 pm

**Kick Omega out of USA waters!**

I have personally witnessed Omega killing prized gamefish and throwing them overboard in pursuit of their menhaden. Not only is it a complete waste of gamefish, it's also preventing those prized gamefish from spawning. Because well over half of the prized gamefish that are mixed in with the menhaden are of breeding size and need to be protected so they can pass on their genes to the next generation of gamefish. Omega is also completely ignoring the rule that they MUST be at least 3 miles out. I have seen them almost up on to the beach in some places. Omega is also a Canadian owned company and send over 90 percent of their menhaden to Canada to be made into fish meal. So not only is it not a USA company but USA is getting almost 0 percent of the benefits. If there are any benefits. IF TRUMP REALLY CARED ABOUT USA HE WOULD KICK THEM OUT into federal waters! EVERY SINGLE recreational fishermen I talk to do NOT want them in our bay. Let alone in USA waters. It's 500 jobs vs at least 50,000 recreational fishermen and captains AND GROWING! We need to kick them out of USA waters PERIOD! END OF STORY!

CommentID: **239075** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/29/26 6:18 pm

### Over fishing

I have seen the damage 1st hand. One day you are fishing and catching fish and the next day the bait fish are gone and there's nothing to be found! With those large nets they can wipe out a school of fish in a couple of hours! Protect the fish by keeping the nets out like everyone else! Thank you, Gary

CommentID: **239076** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jackson lewis

1/29/26 9:09 pm

### I agree

I agree, help the sport fish

CommentID: **239078** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark Lea

1/29/26 9:27 pm

### We need a full stop to evaluate the population better.

Pass this legislation

CommentID: **239079** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 8:58 am

### Stop over fishing

Please stop over fishing of menhaden in the bay! Human greed is impacting critical food webs for eagles and other bay reliant species.

CommentID: **239082** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Hostalka

1/30/26 10:13 am

**Stop**

I agree. We need to stop! Get omega out of the Chesapeake

CommentID: **239084** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 11:14 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

Do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239089** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 11:17 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239090** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hannah Rosas

1/30/26 11:24 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition. This is going to be detrimental to a lot more people than just Omega Protein

CommentID: **239092** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alex Rosas

1/30/26 11:25 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239093** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve Rosas

1/30/26 11:25 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239094** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lynette Wallace

1/30/26 11:26 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition. Science shows menhaden are not overfished. This is going to permanently damage the economy in this area.

CommentID: **239095** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jackii Torres

1/30/26 11:27 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239096** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kayleb Robinson

1/30/26 11:28 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239097** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dalton Jewell

1/30/26 11:33 am

**I do not support this petition**

I strongly disagree with this petition

CommentID: **239098** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zach Kues

1/30/26 11:42 am

**Do Not Support this Petition**

Do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239099** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amanda Kues

1/30/26 11:43 am

**Do not support this petition**

Do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239100** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rachel Lowery

1/30/26 11:43 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239101** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tiffany W

1/30/26 11:44 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition. thanks!

CommentID: **239102** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy Middleton

1/30/26 11:44 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239103** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kaleb Middleton

1/30/26 11:44 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239104** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carrie Jett

1/30/26 11:45 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239105** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ashley Dawson

1/30/26 11:49 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239106** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carolina E. Reynolds

1/30/26 11:59 am

**VA Regulatory Town Hall - Manheden Fisheries**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239107** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brenda L Allen

1/30/26 12:00 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239108** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 12:27 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239109** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Berkley Cash

1/30/26 12:27 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239110** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather cash

1/30/26 12:36 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239111** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dwayne Corsey

1/30/26 1:05 pm

**Do not support this petition**

Do not support this petition

CommentID: **239114** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Thomas Moore

1/30/26 1:10 pm

**I do not support**

148 year old industry. Hard working folks making a living!!!!3

CommentID: **239115** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason L Lewis

1/30/26 1:13 pm

**I don't support this petition**

I dont support this petition!

CommentID: **239116** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bryce Packett

1/30/26 1:21 pm

**Do NOT support this at all.**

**Not in support** of this. Let's stop pollution and things that are really an issue.

CommentID: **239118** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy H.

1/30/26 1:38 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

I DO NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239120** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ben Packett

1/30/26 1:49 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239121** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Omega Protein

1/30/26 2:02 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!**

Do not support!

CommentID: **239122** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** A Dawson

1/30/26 2:02 pm

**Omega P**

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!**

CommentID: **239123** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nicole Moore

1/30/26 2:07 pm

**I do not support**

As an elementary schoolteacher in Northumberland County I cannot express how much Ocean Harvesters means not just to our family but our entire community. In my 25 years of teaching I cannot count the number of children that have come through our school system and gone on to obtain degrees that hard working folks at Omega and Ocean harvesters were able to support financially.

CommentID: **239124** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Lowery

1/30/26 2:16 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239126** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Geneva Lowery

1/30/26 2:17 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239127** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bonnie Sanders

1/30/26 2:17 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239128** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith Ball

1/30/26 2:17 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239129** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jesse Sanders

1/30/26 2:18 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239130** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Niki Jensen

1/30/26 2:18 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239131** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Newsome

1/30/26 2:19 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239132** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Mahan

1/30/26 2:19 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239133** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brigham Sanders

1/30/26 2:19 pm

**I do NOT support this**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239134** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ida Mahan

1/30/26 2:21 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239135** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** M. Lowery

1/30/26 2:22 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239136** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ashley Marks

1/30/26 2:23 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239137** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nathan Marks

1/30/26 2:25 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239138** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark Koslow

1/30/26 2:31 pm

**Stop the fishing for menhaden in the Bay**

Not unlike many other environmental issues, because there are so many monetary issues involved, we tend to put it off until it is too late. One day, the fishery will collapse, and the industry will shut down. Future generations will wonder why something was not done before it was too late. The time has come to take action!

CommentID: **239139** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rocco L.

1/30/26 2:31 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239140** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donald Blue

1/30/26 3:07 pm

**I do not support**

I'm a Plant Engineer at Omega Protein in Reedville and I'm opposed to this petition for a moratorium.

The 2025 ASMFC stock assessment is clear - menhaden are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Yes, the assessment found fishing mortality was above the ERP target, but the Management Board already addressed this in October by cutting the 2026 coastwide TAC by 20%. That reduction carries a 0% chance of overfishing. The science doesn't call for a complete shutdown of the fishery.

The petition asks for a moratorium until a long list of conditions are "demonstrated" but doesn't define what that actually means or looks like. Meanwhile, the Science Center for Marine Fisheries just funded a research effort with UMCES, VIMS, and NOAA to develop real Bay-specific reference points. Why impose a moratorium before that science is even completed? The existing Bay cap of 51,000 metric tons has been in place since 2006 and provides meaningful protection.

I work at this facility every day. The Reedville plant is the last menhaden reduction operation on the entire Atlantic coast. We're talking about hundreds of union jobs in a rural part of Virginia that doesn't have a lot of other options. The fishery is MSC certified sustainable. Shutting it down based on conditions that go well beyond what the peer-reviewed science recommends would be devastating to this community.

ASMFC has already taken action based on the latest assessment. A moratorium isn't warranted and I urge the Commission to deny this petition.

CommentID: **239141** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Newton

1/30/26 3:16 pm

**Do not support petition**

I don't support this petition

CommentID: **239142** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kristen

1/30/26 3:26 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239143** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charlotte Blackwell

1/30/26 3:27 pm

**I do Not support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239144** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Monta Lee

1/30/26 3:27 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239145** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** I doLionel waddy

1/30/26 3:31 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **239146** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carlos Cockrell

1/30/26 3:32 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239147** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 3:37 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239148** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lionel waddy

1/30/26 3:41 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **239149** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tim Crandall

1/30/26 3:42 pm

**PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239150** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kathy Lewis

1/30/26 3:44 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239151** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tim Crandall

1/30/26 3:44 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239152** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah McElroy

1/30/26 3:44 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239153** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Deondra Jones

1/30/26 3:46 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239154** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Blackwell

1/30/26 3:50 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239155** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Arlene Kilduff

1/30/26 3:50 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239156** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dawson Blackwell

1/30/26 3:51 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239157** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amanda Hall

1/30/26 3:51 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239158** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brandon Davis

1/30/26 4:02 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!

CommentID: **239160** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** giada

1/30/26 4:02 pm

**i do not support**

i do not support this

CommentID: **239161** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jerius Morris

1/30/26 4:03 pm

**I do not support**

i do not support

CommentID: **239162** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carol Haynie Cummings

1/30/26 4:17 pm

**I do NOT support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239163** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy E.

1/30/26 4:20 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239164** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Island Station

1/30/26 4:22 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239165** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andy Hudgins

1/30/26 4:23 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239166** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy Hudgins

1/30/26 4:33 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239167** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Stephen H.

1/30/26 4:35 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239168** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Isabella Hudgins

1/30/26 4:36 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239169** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gayle H.

1/30/26 4:41 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239170** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ty Hudgins

1/30/26 4:46 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239171** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bailey Lewis

1/30/26 4:51 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

I do not support this petition!!

CommentID: **239172** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jane B. Crowther

1/30/26 5:02 pm

**Do not support this needless petition!**

The Menhaden Rendering Industry in Virginia plays a vital role in supporting our communities and driving regional economic sustainability. The amount of donations from this industry given to local non-profits, schools, college scholarships and those in need, touches each one of us, every day. Personally, being deeply entrenched in the nutritional aspects of the products produced from menhaden, I am well aware of the importance of this Protein and Omega-3 rich nutrient sold to US based companies that provide nutritious feed to our companion animals and to animals that feed each of us. In addition, the menhaden provides us omega-3 supplementation for our own health maintenance. My 90+ year old parents are consumers of omega-3! It is endearing to be a part of a 100+ year old industry and a family of companies that takes great care of the natural resource, its employees, the local community and an awesome customer base.

I urge each of you to carefully consider this:

1) Come to see and understand first-hand what we do, by arranging a tour of our companies

AND

2) Do not support this needless petition!

CommentID: **239174** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zach Hall

1/30/26 5:29 pm

**I do not support this petition**

CommentID: **239178** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George w Ball

1/30/26 5:37 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239179** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kassidy Lewis-Buergert

1/30/26 5:38 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239180** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Buergert

1/30/26 5:38 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239181** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kierston Bell

1/30/26 5:39 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239182** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Herb Lewis

1/30/26 5:39 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239183** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nancy Lewis

1/30/26 5:39 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239184** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/30/26 5:41 pm

**I do NOT support reduction of menhaden**

I do NOT support a reduction! Even your studies do not prove there is a need for a reduction

CommentID: **239185** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John lewis

1/30/26 5:43 pm

**I do not support this**

The science has shown no reason to enact limits. There were millions of menhaden seen in the bay in dec and january.... the population is strong

CommentID: **239186** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Juanita moore

1/30/26 5:44 pm

**I do no support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239187** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Diane SHACKLEFORD

1/30/26 5:46 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239188** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Betty Ball

1/30/26 5:49 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do support this petition

CommentID: **239189** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roberta Ball

1/30/26 5:50 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239190** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Owens

1/30/26 5:50 pm

**I DO support the petition to pause menhaden purse-seine fishing.**

I do support the petition to pause purse-seine fishing for Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay until there has been a rebound in the population of rockfish. Rockfish support a broad base of the economy in the entire bay region not just one locality.

Additionally, it appears that populations of Osprey are falling due to a lack of Menhaden available for them to feed their young as food.

I can remember in my past seeing vast schools of Menhaden boiling on the surface and being chased by schools of striped bass. I spent a lot of time on the Bay this year and never saw this occur. It is a collapse of the food chain in the Chesapeake Bay due to the overfishing of menhaden by omega protein.

CommentID: **239191** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Cambell

1/30/26 5:52 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239192** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Omar Aleman

1/30/26 5:53 pm

**Not support**

I Do Not Support This Petition

CommentID: **239193** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brenda Burnett

1/30/26 5:54 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239194** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** REBECCA HAYNIE

1/30/26 5:56 pm

**IDO NOT support this**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239195** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert wondson

1/30/26 6:04 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239196** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lorin Richard

1/30/26 6:07 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239197** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bryan Latham

1/30/26 6:08 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petitioni

CommentID: **239198** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Caroline Richard

1/30/26 6:08 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239199** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tyler Jones

1/30/26 6:08 pm

**Chesapeake Bay menhaden fishing ban.**

I do NOT support this petition...

CommentID: **239200** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Vincent Pryor

1/30/26 6:10 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239201** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tim Harris

1/30/26 6:10 pm

**I support the petition. This is a tragedy.**

Subject: Tragedy of the Commons

Allowing a foreign-owned or domestic company to deplete the fundamental food fish that filters the water and nourishes whales, osprey, striper and many more animals, defies all logic. We spend billions trying to clean up the Bay and then allow the removal of billions of filter feeding fish? It's corrupt.

I taught our two sons this: when something doesn't make sense, money is usually involved. In this case, money and greed are ruining our fishery.

Please at least use science to guide us and not PAC money from the reduction fishery.

Virginia is better than this

CommentID: **239202** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Tyler Jones

1/30/26 6:11 pm

**I do NOT support this petition...**

I strongly oppose this petition.

CommentID: **239203** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Freddie Credle

1/30/26 6:24 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support EV

CommentID: **239204** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Jones

1/30/26 6:56 pm

**Menhaden petition**

I DO NOT Support this petition

CommentID: **239208** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Vickie Jones

1/30/26 6:59 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT Support this petition

CommentID: **239209** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hailee Jones

1/30/26 7:30 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition!**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239213** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lee Jones

1/30/26 7:39 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I oppose this petition

CommentID: **239215** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tucker Jones

1/30/26 7:40 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I strongly oppose this petition

CommentID: **239216** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Jones

1/30/26 7:59 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239217** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peter Watson

1/30/26 8:12 pm

**Petition for Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fis**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **239218** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** C Lee Jones

1/30/26 8:15 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239219** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Dull

1/30/26 8:16 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239220** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dustin

1/30/26 8:27 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I Don not Support

CommentID: **239221** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Julio Silva

1/30/26 8:38 pm

**Menhaden petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239222** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill

1/30/26 8:43 pm

**Menhaden**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!

CommentID: **239223** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tarlie Silva

1/30/26 8:43 pm

**I DO NOT support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239224** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kimberly Johnson

1/30/26 8:54 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239225** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trystin Thomas

1/30/26 9:36 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239226** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dennis VanCamp

1/30/26 9:42 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239228** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Hudnall

1/31/26 2:44 am

**Menhaden moratorium**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239244** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Hudnall

1/31/26 2:46 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239245** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sharon Godfrey

1/31/26 3:55 am

**Menhaden moratorium**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS!!!

CommentID: **239246** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John T. Emery

1/31/26 6:24 am

**I support this petition**

Fully support

CommentID: **239247** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/31/26 10:11 am

### **I support the petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239248** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jennifer M.

1/31/26 11:08 am

### **Menhaden is a key foundational species**

Menhaden are one of the most crucial species at the base of the Bay food chain. Their abundance is key to all other life thriving. Please note the case study from New York Harbor:

NYC's Whale Population is Making a Comeback - Here's Why.

Menhaden (bunker fish) populations have surged in New York Harbor due to improved water quality and stricter fishing regulations since 2012. This abundance of prey has driven a dramatic, documented comeback of humpback whales, with sightings increasing from 3 in 2011 to over 300 in 2019.

Key Details on the Rebound

Food Source: Menhaden are a key, high-fat, schooling fish that act as a crucial food source for whales, dolphins, and birds.

Cleaner Harbor: Improvements to the Hudson River and city water quality, spurred by the Clean Water Act, have allowed the ecosystem to recover.

Population Surge: Following fishing caps in 2012, menhaden numbers have risen sharply, leading to a visible return of marine mammals to the area, with 500+ whales observed in 2019.

Whale Resurgence: Humpback whales are now frequently sighted around the Statue of Liberty and the Rockaways, with whale-watching tours becoming common.

Conservation Impact: The Marine Mammal Protection Act and Endangered Species Act helped protect these populations, which are now reclaiming their old habitat.

CommentID: **239249** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brandon Hamilton

1/31/26 11:08 am

**I support this petition**

Drastic decline of menhaden on the Atlantic coast. You cant determine the cause until a study is completed. If industrial fishing os the cause why wait until it is too late to stop it. A handful of US jobs are not worth risking the entire ecosystem of the Atlantic coast.

CommentID: **239250** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Salvatore C.

1/31/26 11:12 am

**Support moratorium**

I support this petition. The bay is being overfished

CommentID: **239251** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alison F.

1/31/26 11:14 am

**I support this petition**

I support the moratorium on menhaden overfishing.

CommentID: **239252** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jim Stuart

1/31/26 11:16 am

**Stop Omega Protein**

I support the petition to stop menhaden fishing and allow the Bay to recover.

CommentID: **239253** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Reeves

1/31/26 11:19 am

**Support Chesapeake Bay menhaden fishing ban.**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239254** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katrina S.

1/31/26 11:28 am

### **Tragedy of the Commons**

Classic example. Unregulated fishery means greedy corporations will overfish until there is nothing left. Science-supported studies must back responsible laws to keep menhaden populations healthy for future generations.

CommentID: **239255** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kyle Whitmer

1/31/26 11:35 am

### **Strongly SUPPORT**

This was so well said that I must second this comment:

"The menhaden industry has decimated the migratory striped bass fishery in the Chesapeake Bay, has caused a decline in osprey populations, and trends suggest there could be several other negative effects on the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is a natural, cultural, and environmental heritage resource that should be held in tact for equitable use, not pillaged for the gain of foreign business."

CommentID: **239256** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nick Sterrett

1/31/26 11:48 am

### **I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition.

Menhaden have been harvested sustainably in this region for 148 years. The science confirms the stock is not overfished and no overfishing is occurring, with a 0% chance of overfishing, even at increased harvest levels. The fishery is also certified by MSC, which is the gold standard of global fisheries certifications; confirming a healthy stock, sustainable fishing methods, and robust fishery management.

Pushing menhaden fishing out of the Chesapeake Bay would cripple the economy of the Northern Neck and is not supported by any data or anecdotal evidence. The Menhaden harvest in the Chesapeake Bay is at historically low levels, and the Bay cap is not supported by any science. Recent surveys over the past several years by MD DNR show record levels of juvenile menhaden (as well as other forage species) in the upper region of the Chesapeake Bay. This positive trend in menhaden and other forage fish suggest that the forage base in the Bay remains robust, supporting predators such as striped bass, bluefish, and birds. Additionally, even though rockfish are overfished, recent studies by VA, MD, and Potomac River Fisheries show the rockfish surveyed are very healthy, indicating they are well fed.

Please support our multi-generational, local, hardworking Virginia watermen, as well as our local economy and do not consider this petition.

CommentID: **239257** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah Pope

1/31/26 3:08 pm

### **I encourage limits on fishing menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay**

There needs to be oversight on foreign business that over harvest menhaden stock in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239258** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** R. D. Hudnall

1/31/26 3:45 pm

### **I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS**

The proposed pause on Menhaden fishing is not only unnecessary for the species, but would also destroy a huge part of Virginias rural economy by forcing hundreds of people out of work.

CommentID: **239259** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Virginia Rittenhouse

1/31/26 3:51 pm

### **Don't support**

I definitely do not support with this petition, at all.

CommentID: **239260** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dale Keyser

1/31/26 3:56 pm

**I strongly do not support the petition. It will put a lot of people out of work.**

I strongly do not support this petition. It is the livelihood of many families in Reidville and we are a fishing village

CommentID: **239261** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Beasley

1/31/26 4:11 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS**

I do not support this..

CommentID: **239262** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George Bowen

1/31/26 4:19 pm

**Don't support**

Don't support

CommentID: **239263** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Forrest Dameron

1/31/26 4:28 pm

**Menhaden**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239264** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Elizabeth Parker

1/31/26 4:38 pm

**Menhaden .**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239265** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/31/26 5:36 pm

**Don't support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239266** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gary hodes

1/31/26 5:39 pm

**Petition vote**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239267** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gary hodes

1/31/26 5:41 pm

**I do not support this**

Petition

CommentID: **239268** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

1/31/26 6:13 pm

**I support this petition**

Ban the menhaden reduction fishery

CommentID: **239269** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lacie Gaskins

1/31/26 6:27 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239270** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Goodman

1/31/26 6:43 pm

**Yes I support**

I support, it's to to save the food source in the bay

CommentID: **239271** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jimmy Crandall

1/31/26 6:59 pm

**Do not support this petition.**

Do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239272** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Haynie

1/31/26 7:32 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239273** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kara G

1/31/26 7:45 pm

**I support this petition**

It's time for industrial reduction fishing to move outside of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia state waters. They are destroying the nursery of the Chesapeake Bay for profits to a foreign company. Omega needs to fish outside of the 3 mile line in EEZ waters not state waters.

CommentID: **239274** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charles E. Clarke

1/31/26 7:47 pm

**I fully support this potion**

The health of the Chesapeake Bay should be a priority.

CommentID: **239275** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charles E. Clarke

1/31/26 7:49 pm

**I fully support this petition**

The health of the Chesapeake Bay should be a priority.

CommentID: **239276** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ricky Sears

1/31/26 8:36 pm

**I fully support this petition**

I fully support this petition

CommentID: **239277** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dylan Clay

1/31/26 8:36 pm

**I 100% SUPPORT this petition**

Omega has been destroying our waters for far too long they need to go. It's ashame they gotta put all their employees in here to vote on this

CommentID: **239278** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marcus Coffman

1/31/26 8:39 pm

**Yes I support 100%**

There should be a third party study performed before anymore fishing is done in the bay for menhaden. Once a resource is depleted it's nearly impossible to get it back.

CommentID: **239279** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** C.L. Godfrey

1/31/26 9:45 pm

**I DO NOT SUPORT THIS**

I DO NOT SUPPORTTHIS

CommentID: **239280** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John B. Reeves Sr.

1/31/26 10:36 pm

**Yes, I support efforts to pause or greatly reduce menhaden harvest within Chesapeake Bay**

I support subject efforts to pause or greatly reduce menhaden fish harvest within the Chesapeake Bay until an objective and scientific study has been done and approved that will inform decision makers on the recommended range of yearly menhaden harvesting from the Chesapeake Bay (including the Maryland portions of the main Bay).

CommentID: **239281** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard

2/1/26 4:29 am

**Vaidity of comments**

Just glancing at the comments it seems obvious some of them are not valid. I note many of the non-supporting comments are made within minutes of each other and due to there not being a method of validating that each comment is done by a validated user I suspect it is one person doing many entries.

I'm sure you are aware of this as well and hopefully you have some method of knowing the validity of each entry.

I've already stated I'm in favor of limiting or for a time not allowing any menhaden to be taken from Chesapeake Bay and determining the effects.

CommentID: **239282** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brenda Reed

2/1/26 6:25 am

**I support this petition**

Overfishing in the bay is a problem and has been for some time.

CommentID: **239283** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Josh Wittman

2/1/26 7:09 am

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239284** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Wilhoite

2/1/26 7:12 am

**Menhaden Petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239285** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Lipcsey

2/1/26 8:46 am

**Menhaden Fishing in the bay**

Menhaden play a crucial role in supporting sport fishing in the Chesapeake Bay. The recent declines in both Stripe Bass and Blue Fish are a direct result of overfishing of Menhaden. The economic benefits of sport fishing are far greater than that of commercial Menhaden fishing. It's time to ban the commercial fishing of Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239286** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hunter Tucker, HawgHunterChartersLLC

2/1/26 9:01 am

**I support this petition**

Menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay needs to be stopped.

CommentID: **239287** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dalton Keyser

2/1/26 9:02 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239288** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ellie Brann

2/1/26 9:59 am

**I DO NOT support this petition.**

I DO NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239289** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anthony Amendolare

2/1/26 10:00 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PETITION.

CommentID: **239290** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hannah Hayes

2/1/26 10:28 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239291** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Logan Hinson

2/1/26 10:29 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239292** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alec Sterrett

2/1/26 10:54 am

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239293** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Norris Bibbens

2/1/26 11:06 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support This petition

CommentID: **239294** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Abby Shirah

2/1/26 11:09 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support the petition. There is not enough scientific evidence to support this petition. Please protect the industry that supports a local community, local economy, and most importantly the families impacted.

CommentID: **239295** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Travis L Abbott

2/1/26 12:22 pm

**Menhaden moratorium**

I oppose this petition.

CommentID: **239296** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/1/26 12:26 pm

**Yes, I support and agree with the petition.**

Less menhaden = more water pollution + much less marine animals and fish (especially striped bass) in Chesapeake Bay. It is thousand folds more important to VA and all other states in East Coast than the gain of a company and a few hundred VA residents that work there.

Those jobs are replaceable but menhaden as a vital resource for Chesapeake Bay and Mid Atlantic Ocean are not.

CommentID: **239297** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Scott Mitchell

2/1/26 12:31 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239298** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tammy Ferver

2/1/26 12:38 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239299** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrew Dameron

2/1/26 12:39 pm

**I Do not support this**

This will harm hundreds of AMERICAN families that depend on this fishery to live

CommentID: **239300** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Forrest Brann

2/1/26 1:07 pm

### **I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

This petition is anything but fair and equitable based on its unreasonable and one sided demands. This temporary moratorium will end up being permanent because the VMRC's "best available science", will not be able to produce a trustworthy study that can be accurate on all these metrics that they will try to measure. Therefore, the ruling will favor the agenda of this petitioner, and not the menhaden fishery. Let's make it fair. If a moratorium is required, make it for all fishing including recreational.

CommentID: **239301** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robby Oder

2/1/26 1:43 pm

### **Menhaden**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239302** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ed C.

2/1/26 1:45 pm

### **I support a moratorium on Menhaden fishing**

Industrial reduction fishing of Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay is destroying the ecology of the bay and the other fish populations that rely on the presence of Menhaden in the food chain.

CommentID: **239303** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Dameron

2/1/26 2:23 pm

### **I do not support**

This bill had no scientific merit and should not be supported

CommentID: **239304** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shannon Westman

2/1/26 2:37 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239305** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Stevens

2/1/26 2:40 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **239306** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kimberly Stevens

2/1/26 2:41 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **239307** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Liz Parker

2/1/26 3:04 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I am so totally opposed to this petition.

CommentID: **239308** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Ryan

2/1/26 4:20 pm

**I SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

It's time we start prioritizing the recreational fishery in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239309** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kyle Spruill

2/1/26 4:29 pm

**I support this petition**

Save the Chesapeake Bay. Bring back the fishing economy that's been missing from the ocean front for years.

CommentID: **239310** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kirk Brown

2/1/26 5:06 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239311** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zachary Moore, United States Navy

2/1/26 5:56 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

My family has been involved with this industry for 150 years!!! Leave the industry alone!!!!

CommentID: **239312** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith Mason

2/1/26 6:03 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

Do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239313** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tyler Mitchell

2/1/26 6:04 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I Do Not Support

CommentID: **239314** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chip WoodAnonymous

2/1/26 6:10 pm

**Please pause the Menhaden fishing**

Please proceed with the pause, please make it permanent!

CommentID: **239315** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Des So

2/1/26 6:35 pm

**Importance of Menhaden ( absolutely yes to the petition)**

VA has allowed too long for this rampage of menhaden to go on in Chesapeake Bay. The result has been pathetic. It has not only decreased the menhaden population but all species of marine animal and fish population in the Bay, as menhaden is the most important natural food source for so many of them, most importantly striped bass.

More importantly, menhaden helps to maintain the water quality of the bay by eating algae ( sucking the oxygen out of the water) and filtering the water, too. Algae boom that happens in most Chesapeake Bay tributaries during the summer and kills newly hatched stripe bass fingerlings.

The most important fishery after the decline of Atlantic cod, undoubtly is striped bass. Chesapeak Bay and its tributaries are the most important spawning grounds of this migrating specie; about 70% of entire striped bass stock spawning historically. It has reduced the striper population, especially in mid Atlantic states. The recent emergency regulation of limiting striped bass catch in entire eastern states is the proof of that. Therefore, this is a much bigger matter not only for VA, but all other states.

CommentID: **239316** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Elise Sterrett

2/1/26 7:00 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition! My family has been involved in the Reedville Menhaden industry for 6 generations! Please support the hardworking local watermen of Reedville and do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239317** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/1/26 7:11 pm

**I support the petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239318** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/1/26 7:20 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239319** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/1/26 9:04 pm

**Menhaden Reduction Fisheries**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239320** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rodney E Fultz

2/1/26 9:23 pm

**I fully SUPPORT this petition,**

The trail of dead bunker they leave is abominable. Let them fish in the ocean, not in the bay.

CommentID: **239321** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Samuel Fultz

2/1/26 9:44 pm

**I support this petition.**

Regulation of Menhaden fishing is overdue for an ecosystem like the Chesapeake. Without further regulation, all species that rely on Menhaden for food will continue to dwindle in population. Do what is right for the Bay!

CommentID: **239322** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emily Fultz

2/1/26 9:51 pm

**I support this petition!! 100%**

I have the joy of fishing here with my family in the summers. It is a sweet memory that I would like to continue one day with my own children. We must preserve the beauty of this bay.

CommentID: **239323** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matthew Fultz

2/1/26 10:05 pm

**I support this petition.**

Reduce menhaden netting.

CommentID: **239324** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Garykelleysr

2/1/26 10:06 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239325** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 6:59 am

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition. It is unwarranted, and not supported by the science

CommentID: **239326** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 7:19 am

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition it does not follow the science . The menhaden fishery is sustainable that has been proven by multiple studies

CommentID: **239327** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katie Keyser

2/2/26 7:23 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239328** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dee Fauntleroy

2/2/26 7:27 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239329** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Eric McNab

2/2/26 7:47 am

**Do not Support**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239330** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alan Hinson

2/2/26 8:26 am

**Menhaden**

I do not Support

CommentID: **239332** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tina Caudle

2/2/26 8:53 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239333** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andy Hall

2/2/26 8:54 am

**I do NOT support**

This petition is not based on any sound science. In fact, the stock is extremely healthy. it is not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring.

CommentID: **239334** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 9:00 am

**Time for Science! I support this!**

This topic has so many moving pieces that it would seem prudent to take a deep breath and get the science! I support this petition.

CommentID: **239335** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Becca Sterrett

2/2/26 9:26 am

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition!!

CommentID: **239336** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sonny abbott

2/2/26 10:38 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239340** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William abbott

2/2/26 10:39 am

**Don't support**

Do not support this petition

CommentID: **239341** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ben abbott

2/2/26 10:40 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239342** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peggy abbott

2/2/26 10:41 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239343** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Timothy abbott

2/2/26 10:42 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239344** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Rahn

2/2/26 10:42 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239345** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mathew abbott

2/2/26 10:43 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239346** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lincoln abbott

2/2/26 10:44 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239347** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Betty abbott

2/2/26 10:44 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239348** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gregory wright

2/2/26 10:56 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239349** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Darvelle kelly

2/2/26 10:56 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239350** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Clyde randolf

2/2/26 10:57 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239351** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nelson brooks

2/2/26 10:58 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239352** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ronnie butler

2/2/26 10:59 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239353** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Damon cotrel

2/2/26 11:00 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239354** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cornell palmer

2/2/26 11:01 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239355** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert williams

2/2/26 11:02 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239356** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith smith

2/2/26 11:03 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239357** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ray smith

2/2/26 11:03 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239358** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Belinda abbott

2/2/26 11:04 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239359** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Morgan jenkins

2/2/26 11:05 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239360** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Winfield doblin

2/2/26 11:06 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239361** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jamonte Norris

2/2/26 11:07 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239362** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lachone palmer

2/2/26 11:07 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239363** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marty carter

2/2/26 11:08 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239364** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marvin swann

2/2/26 11:10 am

**Don't support**

Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239365** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aaron taylor

2/2/26 11:13 am

**Don't support this petition**

Don't support

CommentID: **239366** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** brandon tate

2/2/26 11:22 am

**dont support this petition**

dont support

CommentID: **239367** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Morris

2/2/26 11:53 am

**Let Them fish OUTSIDE of the 3 Mile Line!**

Menhaden overfishing has been an issue in our Virginia waters for several years, and something must change! Future generations will never be able to experience the great fishing in our waters that I grew up on if there's nothing left to catch. It has been scientifically proven that many of our native and migratory species feed on the menhaden. Please do the research and save our precious Chesapeake Bay!

CommentID: **239369** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 11:55 am

**I agree**

I agree. Kick them out.

CommentID: **239370** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 11:58 am

**I'm in support**

I am in support of the moratorium on menhaden reduction fisheries.

CommentID: **239371** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 12:30 pm

**Stop Menhaden fishery in the Chesapeake Bay**

I support the petition.

CommentID: **239372** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jaison John Thomas

2/2/26 1:30 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239373** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Blackwell

2/2/26 2:21 pm

**SUPPORT this petition**

I fully support this petition.

CommentID: **239374** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Covington

2/2/26 2:22 pm

**Support the petition**

I support the petition to pause the menhaden fishery.

CommentID: **239375** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Victoria Tuthill

2/2/26 3:02 pm

**I do not support this!**

*I do not support this!*

CommentID: **239376** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George Tuthill

2/2/26 3:03 pm

**I do not support this!**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239377** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 3:07 pm

**I support this. Put a hold on menhaden reduction fisheries**

I am in full support of this. Omega needs to be stopped.

CommentID: **239378** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Fred Covington

2/2/26 3:58 pm

**Support the petition**

I vehemently support the petition.

CommentID: **239379** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Martina B.

2/2/26 4:00 pm

**I support the petition**

We support science and the pause in menhaden fishing.

CommentID: **239380** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sandra Smiyh

2/2/26 4:04 pm

**Menhaden**

I am in support of the petition to stop Menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239381** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** E. Eskridge

2/2/26 4:07 pm

**Foreign company profits from unregulated fishing**

Omega is a foreign owned company indiscriminately seine net fishing all life out of our bay for profit. Say "no" to unregulated fishing. Say "yes" to limits and regulations that will sustain life in the

bay and a thriving fishery for future generations.

CommentID: **239382** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Noel

2/2/26 4:22 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239383** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** mike mahan

2/2/26 4:27 pm

**i agree**

stop omega. why are they not fishijg in canada?

CommentID: **239384** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lee Robbins

2/2/26 4:50 pm

**I strongly oppose this petition**

I strongly disagree with this petition. There is no scientific evidence to push these boats out of the Chesapeake Bay. I have fished for menhaden as a 2 nd generation fishermen and understand how the fish migrate in and out of the Bay. With over 43 years experience in this industry I have seen more fish in the Bay than ever before. Just because we don't catch them doesn't mean that they are not there. We have more regulations on us now than ever before. The state of Va. should be proud of this industry that has been supporting the local and state businesses and communities for well over 160 years. The people that work at the Reedville plant are mostly Va residents with the exception of about 3-4 from NC.

CommentID: **239385** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michelle W Robbins

2/2/26 4:58 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition! These are hard working people and they don't deserve to have their jobs threatened by sport-fisherman. Every year they have to fight to keep a job. Politics has no place in commercial fishing.

CommentID: **239386** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ethan hall

2/2/26 5:33 pm

**Moratorium**

I agree

CommentID: **239387** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 5:33 pm

**I agree**

I agree

CommentID: **239388** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rosie Keene

2/2/26 5:51 pm

**Ensure fishery for the future; regulate Omega**

We want a fishery for our children and grandchildren. We strongly support this petition to pause and allow the proper study of overfishing impacts on the future health of the bay.

CommentID: **239389** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Keene

2/2/26 5:53 pm

**Ensure fishery for the future; regulate Omega**

We want a fishery for our children and grandchildren. We strongly support this petition to pause and allow the proper study of overfishing impacts on the future health of the bay.

CommentID: **239390** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Weirup

2/2/26 6:54 pm

### **STOP INDUSTRIAL FISHING IN THE BAY**

I fully support a moratorium on industrial fishing in the bay completely. Omega had demonstrated and previous catch data is supporting claims that it is destructive to fish population and that the fishing can/should be done outside of state waters.

CommentID: **239391** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Patrick McMath

2/2/26 7:35 pm

### **Petition signature**

Stop the menhaden fishing in the bay. Require 3NM out for fishing if at all!

CommentID: **239392** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 7:42 pm

### **I support this petition.**

They need to be kicked out from USA water all together.

CommentID: **239393** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Danny Crabbe

2/2/26 7:48 pm

### **I do not support**

I've been a charter boat captain for 60 years. I've worked around the menhaden fleet for all 60 of those years. They are all hard working folks. Leave them and the charter boats alone!!!! Let us work, that's all we want.

CommentID: **239394** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** P. Kennedy

2/2/26 7:53 pm

**Support this petition**

In support of this petition

CommentID: **239395** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Lampson

2/2/26 7:57 pm

**No omega in the bay!**

I've seen first hand the devastation to bull drum and cobia after omega goes through. Huge spills, tons of dead loss.

CommentID: **239396** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark Fernandez

2/2/26 8:12 pm

**I support the resolution**

To limit menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake bay

CommentID: **239397** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 8:28 pm

**Support the petition**

I Support this petition. Omega needs to be regulated.

CommentID: **239398** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 8:59 pm

**I agree**

I agree

CommentID: **239400** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Britt Altizer

2/2/26 9:34 pm

**I support a full moratorium**

Virginia is one of the last states to allow a fishery like this. Look at other reduction fisheries around the world. It's a no brainer to stop destroying the food chain! Respect the ocean!!!!

CommentID: **239401** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeff

2/2/26 9:35 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239402** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/2/26 9:41 pm

**In Favor**

In favor of a moratorium.

CommentID: **239403** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Warren T Poirier

2/2/26 10:46 pm

**Protect our Menhaden!**

I am in support of protective measures to protect the menhaden in the Chesapeake bay and all of Virginia's tributaries and estuaries.

CommentID: **239404** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Edward Lee

2/3/26 7:48 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239405** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Maria Lee

2/3/26 7:49 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239406** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/3/26 9:41 am

**Agree with moratorium**

Reduction fishing vessels are forced to leave the bay due to the amount of fish being depleted. No business would choose to spend more money in fuel unless they had to due to pogies being virtually gone within the bay by the end of the season.

CommentID: **239408** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** WILLIAM A. TAYLOR, OMEGA PROTEIN

2/3/26 11:02 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239409** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** GWEN TAYLOR

2/3/26 11:03 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239410** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** JOANNA TAYLOR

2/3/26 11:04 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239411** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** BEVERLY SCOTT

2/3/26 11:05 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239412** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/3/26 11:05 am

**I support this petition**

We need to do something before it's too late. Put omega on a leash.

CommentID: **239413** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Allen Davis Jr

2/3/26 11:15 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239414** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William S Diller

2/3/26 11:51 am

**I do not support this petition!!**

I don't support this petition an hope one day more people will try being informed instead of just opinionated.

CommentID: **239415** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michelle Robbins

2/3/26 12:31 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition!!**

I DO NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239416** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Ricks

2/3/26 1:06 pm

**I support this petition**

Menhaden are vital to the continued health and wellbeing of the Chesapeake Bay. The current reduction industry is causing harm to this ecosystem as evidenced by the severe drop in osprey and striped bass populations.

CommentID: **239417** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cathy Wash

2/3/26 1:08 pm

**Stop fishing menhaven in the bay**

I agree

CommentID: **239418** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Wash

2/3/26 1:15 pm

**Stop menhaden industrial fishing in the bay**

Agee with petition to stop menhaden fishing in the bay

CommentID: **239419** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheri George

2/3/26 1:30 pm

**Menhaden**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239420** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheri George

2/3/26 1:33 pm

**I do not support this reduction**

I do not support this reduction

CommentID: **239421** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lori Pickett

2/3/26 1:34 pm

**Menhaden fishing**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239422** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Franklin George

2/3/26 1:35 pm

**I do not support the menhaden reduction**

I do not support this reduction

CommentID: **239423** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kody George

2/3/26 1:36 pm

**I do not support the menhaden reduction**

I do not support the menhaden reduction

CommentID: **239424** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Belle Timberlake

2/3/26 2:14 pm

**Menhaden Moratorium**

I DO NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239425** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Doug Kuett

2/3/26 2:35 pm

**I don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.**

I have been sailing the Chesapeake Bay for 50+ years. The Bay used to boil with Menhaden. It does not boil any longer. I used to catch plenty of Rockfish. I don't catch them any more. I used to catch Blue Fish. I don't catch them anymore. They are not there to catch. It's not rocket science. If you consistently extract 100 million pounds of protein from a Bay 150 miles long and 20 miles wide, the food chain collapses. Stop the madness.

CommentID: **239426** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert pollard

2/3/26 3:23 pm

**Stop industrial reduction fishing in the bay**

Stop all industrial reduction fishing in the bay

CommentID: **239427** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jonathan VanBuskirk

2/3/26 3:31 pm

## **This Industry Needs to be Kept Accountable**

I do not support a complete moratorium on menhaden fishing. However, I strongly believe that stricter regulations and greater accountability within the Omega Protein industry are absolutely essential to preserve the health and enjoyment of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The Reedville, Virginia facility—Omega Protein's plant—is now the only remaining reduction facility on the entire Atlantic coast. According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, this single plant harvests nearly 70% of all Atlantic menhaden caught along the East Coast, totaling close to 300 million pounds each year. No forage fish population can endure that level of extraction and expect to recover within our lifetimes, especially given the natural mortality rates of menhaden.

Menhaden are the foundation of the marine food web. Species such as the striped bass, bluefin tuna, dolphins, humpback whales, and even the iconic bald eagle depend on this fish as a primary food source. When menhaden are overharvested, every one of these species is put at risk, and the ecological balance that defines the Chesapeake Bay begins to unravel.

Moreover, the methods Omega uses to capture menhaden leave little opportunity for natural recovery. By removing entire schools, the company effectively wipes out local populations, creating temporary ecological dead zones. This local impact is often hidden in aggregate harvest statistics but has very real, immediate consequences for regional biodiversity. Even reducing their catch by half within a given school could help restore local populations and preserve the species' ecological role.

Beyond the ecological harm, Omega Protein's record of compliance raises serious concerns. The company has repeatedly exceeded harvest caps—with over a 30% violation in 2019 and another incident in 2013, which resulted in only minimal financial penalties, amounting to a mere 2.5% of their 2014 annual revenue. Additionally, Omega has been cited multiple times over the past decade for pollution-related violations, including the release of contaminated bilge water and toxic ammonia. These repeated offenses indicate a troubling disregard for environmental stewardship.

To make matters worse, much of the product derived from Atlantic menhaden is exported abroad to support foreign aquaculture operations, meaning that one of our most critical forage species is being exploited to benefit markets in Canada, Switzerland, and parts of Asia—hardly a fair exchange for our local ecosystems and communities.

That said, I want to be clear: I deeply respect the hardworking citizens of Reedville and those employed by Omega Protein. Their heritage, dedication, and contributions to the region's identity are invaluable. These are families and individuals who have given their time, labor, and love to sustain their community. Any new regulations must consider their livelihoods and strive for fairness and practical solutions.

Yet acknowledgment of their commitment does not excuse the company's harmful practices. We owe it to both the workers and the Bay to pursue a balanced agreement—one that preserves jobs

while protecting the irreplaceable natural resources that make those jobs possible.

CommentID: **239428** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/3/26 3:35 pm

### **Menhaden fishing**

It's the #1 fish in the sea. Stop over fishing now. Support 100%

CommentID: **239429** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bruce Andrews

2/3/26 3:58 pm

### **Menhaden bill**

I am totaly against this bill. The reaserch does not support this bill.

CommentID: **239430** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Radford

2/3/26 4:22 pm

### **Reduce the Menhaden reduction limit in the bay and the Atlantic.**

I support reducing the Menhaden reduction annual catch in the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

William Radford

Lancaster, VA

CommentID: **239431** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael S Prindes

2/3/26 4:48 pm

### **Menhaden fishing**

Please put a stop to the industrial menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239432** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** C Appel

2/3/26 5:02 pm

**Petition for Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fis**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239433** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/3/26 5:26 pm

**I'm in support of this petition. Protect the gamefish and osprey.**

If we don't do something soon. We can kiss the striped bass, bull red drum, and cobia fisheries goodbye. I am in support of this petition.

CommentID: **239434** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andy Cortez

2/3/26 5:46 pm

**I support this petition**

VMRC needs to manage the Chesapeake Bay as an ecosystem, with a separate maximum mortality threshold. This petition addresses management uncertainty and aims to conserve all species in the bay. Reduction of effort inside the bay, by moratorium, will give scientists time to determine the acceptable biological catch while rebuilding ecosystem component species. The long-term benefits will far outweigh the short-term costs.

CommentID: **239435** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Misty Moss

2/3/26 7:22 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239436** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joanne Hinson

2/3/26 8:39 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239437** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joan Pittman

2/3/26 8:45 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT!**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239438** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ann DeVaul

2/4/26 7:40 am

**I Support this petition**

Menhaden are too important to the bay. We need good data to evaluate fish stock and the impacts of reduction fishing to the environment. Omega can fish in the ocean, away from the bay, while the study is ongoing.

CommentID: **239439** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ralph Walker

2/4/26 8:11 am

**I do not support!!!**

These are good job in a rural community.

CommentID: **239440** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/4/26 8:25 am

**I am in support**

Regrouping on this topic is necessary. When local fishing people have seen a decline than it is happening.

CommentID: **239442** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Ostrander

2/4/26 8:46 am

**I support this**

What are the opponents of this afraid of? It only makes sense to gather as much information as possible to make the right decision. The science that is out there now already points to a lack of menhaden and by that a very poor management of this public resources.

CommentID: **239443** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paul Glass

2/4/26 9:02 am

**I support this petition**

Commercial menhaden fishing is depleting the food source that many species of wildlife depend on for survival. This needs careful study to determine if any take should be allowed in the future, but it cannot continue at this rate.

CommentID: **239444** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ronald White

2/4/26 9:26 am

**Please eliminate netting of menhaden and excessive bycatch in the Chesapeake Bay.**

Please eliminate netting of menhaden and excessive bycatch in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239445** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peggy Clark

2/4/26 9:33 am

**Protect Chesapeake Bay Ospreys**

I support this petition. Recent research on the Chesapeake Bay osprey population shows evidence that menhaden overfishing is inhibiting osprey chick survival rates (not enough food available) and this is having a harmful impact on this local population.

CommentID: **239446** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Melinda C

2/4/26 1:24 pm

### **I support ban for research**

I support ban of fishing Menhaden while research is completed to understand how overfishing is affecting our wildlife/fisheries

CommentID: **239448** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/4/26 1:43 pm

### **I'm in support of ban on menhaden reduction for research.**

I am in full support of banning menhaden reduction fisheries. Until we at least figure out what is going on.

CommentID: **239449** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Claude Davenport

2/4/26 2:47 pm

### **Menhaden reduction fishing**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239451** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kevin Rose

2/4/26 3:53 pm

### **Do Not Support**

Do Not Support

CommentID: **239452** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brad Ramsey

2/4/26 3:55 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239453** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trevor Deihl

2/4/26 10:02 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239454** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/5/26 5:06 pm

**Remove omega from the bay!**

I am in full support of this petition. Until we figure out what is going on we need to kick omega out.

CommentID: **239457** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brittany Mitchell

2/5/26 9:10 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239458** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/6/26 3:28 pm

**Commercial fishing in the bay.**

There is no reason to put a moratorium on bay fishing the commercial fisherman respect and understand the ecosystem they have to in order to make sure they have a way to continue work they do not over fish they are the ones people that are not on the water, a place where these men people feel at home and love, they do not want to happen to the ecosystem and they take care of the water.

The second reason is that it will destroy Northumberland it is the main industry in that county hundreds of people rely on the bay for income along with other counties the should not pass leave the waterman alone

CommentID: **239461** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chip Williams

2/7/26 7:24 am

**I DO NOT support this bill**

Trust the science. There isn't a problem.

CommentID: **239462** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Cole

2/7/26 8:01 am

**I do not support this bill.**

I do not support this bill.

CommentID: **239463** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Miles Hollingsworth

2/7/26 8:43 am

**Menhaden**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239464** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 8:59 am

**Menhaden**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239465** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 9:01 am

**Do not support**

I do not support this bill!

CommentID: **239466** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cohen Vanlandingham

2/7/26 9:12 am

**I Don't Support This Bill**

I Don't Support This Bill

CommentID: **239467** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 9:12 am

**I do not support this bill**

No

CommentID: **239468** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 9:26 am

**I do not support**

Menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay has been occurring for over 100years in the bay proving that it can be successful and sustainable just in the nature of operation longevity. Understand that fishing will go through periods of abundance and scarcity due to multiple factors such as weather, migration patterns, water temperatures, changes in salinity and sanitation, all factors that change year to year. Any study will be extremely hard if not impossible to accurately predict future trends due in large part to the migration uncertainty and reproduction capabilities of this forage fish. To

shut down a certified sustainable fishery that has been in constant operation for over a hundred years supporting 3rd and 4th generation Virginia families is not good science.

CommentID: **239469** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah Loving

2/7/26 9:58 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL

CommentID: **239470** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Haynie

2/7/26 10:50 am

**I do not support this petition**

There are too many varied opinions about how the menhaden population is overfished. I have been involved in the mehaden fishing business for many years. When I was growing up there were 4 menhaden plants operating on Cockerels Creek. One on the Reedville side and 4 on the Fairport side with many vessels. Now you just have one plant operating with what 6 or 7 vessels. This is a reduction in itself.

There are many opinions and articles but it seems to me that as others have stated they are based upon unproven facts or incorrect science. A lot of families depend upon the **Menhaden Industry to feed their families plus the county depends upon the tax revenue and then you have the companies that also depend upon the fish meal, fish oil and other by-products of the menhaden.**

CommentID: **239471** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jessica Haynie

2/7/26 11:12 am

**I do not support**

No!

CommentID: **239472** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah Haynie

2/7/26 11:13 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239473** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lennie Rock

2/7/26 11:38 am

**NO I do not support**

No I don't support

CommentID: **239474** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 12:58 pm

**HB1048**

I do support.

CommentID: **239475** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Laura Bradley

2/7/26 1:21 pm

**petition**

Do not support

CommentID: **239476** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David

2/7/26 1:28 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239477** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Irvin Deihl

2/7/26 4:04 pm

**Do not support.**

Who's next? Crabbers? Oystermen? Pound Netters? How about a bill mandating shutting down the sewage treatment plants in D.C., Maryland and Northern Virginia? It's their sewage that's killing the Bay.

CommentID: **239478** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Michael Dameron

2/7/26 4:05 pm

**Do not support**

There is no scientific data supporting a shutdown at this time. And to do so before there is data that supports it is jumping the gun. And will be detrimental to the people who make a living directly and indirectly from the fishery.

CommentID: **239479** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Cory Rice

2/7/26 4:09 pm

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239480** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Laura Rice

2/7/26 4:10 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239481** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Burgess

2/7/26 4:12 pm

**I am against this legislation!!**

Against it!

CommentID: **239482** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dan Ford

2/7/26 4:13 pm

**Do not support**

Stop the madness with this every year! The science tells you this is a non issue.

CommentID: **239483** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roger Smith

2/7/26 4:28 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support!!

CommentID: **239484** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Judy Jenkins

2/7/26 4:31 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I

CommentID: **239485** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Holdzkom

2/7/26 4:35 pm

**Save menhaden**

I support this petition. Virginia is the only state on the East coast to allow reduction fishing in state waters, and the Chesapeake Bay is the most important estuary on the East coast.

CommentID: **239486** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dixie Deihl

2/7/26 4:38 pm

**Do Not Support Petition**

Science clearly shows that Atlantic Menhaden are Not Overfished and No Overfishing is Occurring. This petition only risks people's jobs.

CommentID: **239487** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Landon Gaskins

2/7/26 4:41 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239488** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenneth Loving

2/7/26 4:42 pm

**Do not support**

Menhaden fishing in the bay is at the lowest levels in 70 years and is already over regulated. This is totally unnecessary

CommentID: **239489** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carter Gaskins

2/7/26 4:42 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239490** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Frances Loving

2/7/26 4:42 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239491** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tucker Gaskins

2/7/26 4:43 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239492** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Deihl

2/7/26 4:47 pm

**Do Not Support**

People try to blame menhaden fishing for the problems with striped bass but the science says otherwise. Striped bass are OVERFISHED, primarily due to the discord mortality from recreational fishing. Read the ASMFC Striped Bass Stock Assessment. And striped bass health surveys in the Chesapeake Bay which have been done by VMRC for over 30 years, as well as by PRFC in Potomac River show that EVERY YEAR of the survey striped bass have be healthy and well fed. People should stop trying to blame menhaden fishing for this issue.

CommentID: **239493** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard C. (Dick) Smith

2/7/26 4:53 pm

**I do not support this!!**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239494** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lawson Schools jr

2/7/26 4:58 pm

**against any legislative restrictions on any Commercial fisheries.**

Enough is enough, not sure what drives the machine to put people out of work, a specific group wants to decide why the other group does something different then them, Give it a break your group as ours depend on the migratory patters of our target species , Ours and yours , they come an they go we are doing what we have been doing for years, and the fish still prevail, We all need to get on the same page pollution, run off and other issues will hurt both sides more then each other.

CommentID: **239495** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joe Waple

2/7/26 5:01 pm

### **Petition to curtail/end Menhaden reduction fishery in Chesapeake Bay**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239496** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jonathan Craig Rice

2/7/26 5:26 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239497** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marina Pierce

2/7/26 5:30 pm

### **Move Industrial Fishing Out of the Bay**

As a wildlife photographer I have had a front row seat to the decline of osprey in my area of Cape Charles, VA. The pairs are working hard to maintain in the face of development, but they can't fight the industrial fishing that is starving them and their young. It's heartbreaking to watch the chicks killing each other in hopes of getting the small amount of fish the adults can bring back. Or worse, to watch the female abandon the nest with eggs in it because she's starving. Since osprey only feed on fresh fish they are a harbinger to the greater damage being done to the Bay ecosystem by this continued depletion of a foundational species. No one wants to put the fishermen in Reedville out of a job, but they have the option of going to the ocean waters 3 miles off shore to make their catch. The local fishermen, sport fish, ospreys and other critters that depend on menhaden don't have that option. Please do the right thing and take immediate action

to stop this practice until REAL science can be done to protect our national treasure - the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239498** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Maggie Evans

2/7/26 5:35 pm

**I support this bill. Limit commercial fishing of Menhaden**

Save our Osprey

CommentID: **239499** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** BJ Swisher

2/7/26 5:38 pm

**Not for this regulation**

Not in favor of this petition

CommentID: **239500** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrew tjompson

2/7/26 5:41 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239501** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** E Allison

2/7/26 5:42 pm

**Petition**

Do not support

CommentID: **239502** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** AR Bailey

2/7/26 5:45 pm

**Not for this regulation**

Not for this petition

CommentID: **239503** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John E. Haynie

2/7/26 5:53 pm

**I do not support banning menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay**

I am opposed to banning fishing in the Chesapeake Bay!

CommentID: **239504** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Susan Haynie

2/7/26 5:57 pm

**Don't support banning menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay**

I absolutely do not support banning menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay!

these special interest groups should work on cleaning up pollution! The menhaden industry is a good steward to our community!

CommentID: **239505** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Susan Cecere

2/7/26 6:56 pm

**Ban industrial fishing and save the osprey**

Save the osprey

CommentID: **239506** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Martha Foiles

2/7/26 7:15 pm

**I Support This Bill**

Ospreys fought their way back from near extinction due to DDT only to have Omega Protein endanger their existence by overfishing their primary food source, menhaden, in the Chesapeake Bay. Menhaden is an important part of the food chain in the Chesapeake Bay for many species, and Delaware and Maryland do not allow Omega to harvest in the Bay for environmental reasons. Omega can harvest menhaden from the Atlantic Ocean. Please stop them so scientific studies can properly evaluate the risks, and please understand that many of those opposing the bill are employed or otherwise affiliated with Omega Protein.

CommentID: **239507** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lorian Gallagher-Blewitt

2/7/26 7:50 pm

**I wholeheartedly support this petition!**

Study After study has shown that the overfishing of menhaden are a detriment to all of our wildlife in Virginia Waters, and All of those that so desperately Depend on these fish to survive.

CommentID: **239508** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/7/26 8:10 pm

**Save our Menhaden**

Save the bay and our fish!

CommentID: **239509** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lydia Haynie

2/7/26 8:41 pm

**Menhaden**

Stop this constant attack on hard working people! I do not support a ban.

CommentID: **239510** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paige Headley

2/7/26 9:28 pm

**Reduction of medhaden in Chesapeake Bay**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239511** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** jean nelson

2/8/26 2:12 am

**bay need it's own menhaden count. TAC must be based on bay numbers - not ocean numbers**

TAC numbers for the ches bay are based on menhaden in the atlantic not the bay. despite all evidence to the contrary and with no verifiable proof omega claims that they are not overfishing in the bay and last year they couldn't even catch their bay limit due to the lack of menhaden from years of overfishing. it's well past time that an actual study and count of bay menhaden was done and if omega is right the study will prove that. if omega wants to fish the bay they should be required to pay for the study to prove that they are not overfishing.

any future bay tac numbers must be based on bay count numbers not atlantic ocean numbers. omega is well equipped to fish in the atlantic so they will not have to end operation or cutback on numbers - they just have to pause fishing the bay until an accurate bay study and accounting can be completed. canadian owned omega is in the bay with the permission of virginia. no one else even allows them in their waters. if they wanted to be good stewards they would not only welcome a study that sets a reasoned limit that would insure they could work the bay for years to come. the way they currently operate shows that they are not invested in the health of the bay they are only there to take its bounty and make money. their loyalty is to the bottom line not the people of reedville. once they bay is emptied of menhaden they will pack up and leave.

CommentID: **239512** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George Butler

2/8/26 6:19 am

**Menhaden**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239513** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joel Deihl

2/8/26 6:50 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239514** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Haley Deihl

2/8/26 6:51 am

**I do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239515** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Unions are cyber bullying these petitions

2/8/26 7:48 am

**Unions are cyber bullying these petitions**

Not representative of the general public

CommentID: **239517** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith R. Bolek

2/8/26 8:35 am

**I support this petition because it is in the best interests of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia**

I write in support of this petition because a temporary moratorium on purse-seine reduction fishing for menhaden, along with the additional steps and considerations set forth in the petition, are in the best interests of the Chesapeake Bay and the State of Virginia. It also happens to be in the best interests of all of those who depend upon or rely upon the bay, whether human, animal, fish or fowl.

It is undisputed that menhaden populations have declined in the Chesapeake Bay. They are not what they were decades or centuries ago. There are multiple reasons for the decline, but many of them are within our control. So are the means of redressing these declines. If we adopt a temporary moratorium on purse-seine reduction fishing (a name that I have always found to be transparent in its effects), we can provide some time to not only get a true and verified assessment of the state of menhaden in the bay, but also develop a path forward that can lead to increased -- rather than reduced -- populations of the fish.

I am not a scientist. I don't work at the plant in Reedville. But, I am someone who loves the Chesapeake Bay. I have recently been introduced to the beauty found in the eastern shore of Virginia. One of my favorite memories from the time I spent there with my family involves watching my children try to catch fish off a dock adjacent to the bay. I watched as my kids caught menhaden. It was all of our first experience with the fish up close. Seeing those little fish in my kids' hands, with the smiles on their faces, got me to thinking about those little fish. I did my research and discovered their oversized impact upon our bay. I also looked at all sides of the issue. That is when I realized there was only one side: the side of the fish themselves.

This petition seems like a no-brainer. If the menhaden population crashes, there will be ripple effects, like the loss of striped bass, osprey and other creatures who depend upon the fish. *But there will also be the loss of the very jobs that those who oppose this petition seek to protect.* If there are no menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay, then there are less fish to process in Reedville, VA. That will lead to layoffs. Vessels will have to go out further, reducing the menhaden populations farther and farther away.

We need to support the menhaden populations and, if we do, we will end up supporting everyone. The petition strikes the right balance and framework for that support. We need an honest, science-based look at the current state of the menhaden populations in the bay. We need to ensure that all who rely upon menhaden fishing, not just the reduction industry. We need to ensure that the small, family businesses who operate on the bay can continue their way of life. And, we need to make sure that the ecosystem itself remains strong, because menhaden are a cornerstone to that system.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts.

CommentID: **239518** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joel Hudnall

2/8/26 8:45 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239519** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** PATRICK Blewitt

2/8/26 2:31 pm

**The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States**

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and home to thousands of species of plants and animals. Nearly one million waterfowl winter on and near the bay each year — approximately one-third of the Atlantic Coast's migratory population. More than 18 million people live and work in the Chesapeake Bay region, many depending on industries tied to the health of the watershed, including outdoor recreation, farming and fishing.

CommentID: **239520** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Hazzard

2/8/26 3:05 pm

### **Restrict menhaden overharvesting**

Keep America's resources for Americans—unions are blindly signing people up. Omega overfishing of menhaden is destroying American sportfishing on the Chesapeake, and other species that rely on menhaden are in serious jeopardy. KEEP CANADIAN FISHING VESSELS OUT OF OUR MENHADEN.

Corporate greed, pure and simple.

CommentID: **239521** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roberta Kellam

2/8/26 5:31 pm

### **Restore Menhaden Population in Chesapeake Bay**

The citizens of Virginia own the Atlantic Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. The Atlantic Menhaden resource is held in the public trust for the good of the Commonwealth by VMRC. VMRC has failed to maintain the population of the Atlantic Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay for the service and use of all Virginians and the ecology of the Bay. A moratorium on the reduction industry harvesting of Atlantic Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay should now be implemented until such time that a study is completed to show that there is a sufficient supply of menhaden to restore the population to historic levels throughout the Bay, that all ecological services are satisfied, and that the reduction fishery does not cause economic harm to the independent watermen, charter fishermen, and recreational users of the Chesapeake Bay, or ecological harm to the osprey, pelicans, whales, and dolphins.

The federal government has commenced the pertinent study to determine the adequacy of the Atlantic Menhaden population in the Chesapeake Bay through funding allocated to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, of which Virginia is a member. There is ample evidence in the striped bass fishery and osprey reproduction research to demonstrate that the menhaden

population in the Bay is insufficient; the precautionary principle directs that the menhaden reduction fishery should cease until it is proven to be safe to other species and to the economies of other communities beside Reedville, VA (the location of the only reduction fishery operation). Virginians all over the Bay are sick and tired of being pushed around by one Canadian company that provides a couple of hundred union jobs, when independent watermen, guides, and tourism outfits are losing their ability to make a living due to the depletion of menhaden in the Bay. All of us are entitled to be able to take our grandkids out on the Bay and show them how to catch a fish, clean it, and cook it in the traditional way that Virginians have enjoyed for generations. It is time to put an end to the reduction fishery in the Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,

Roberta Kellam

CommentID: **239522** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheri George

2/8/26 6:58 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239523** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenny George

2/8/26 7:01 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239524** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Dent

2/8/26 7:01 pm

**Stopping commercial reduction fishing**

I support this petition. I've watched the Menhaden populations on a constant downcline. Scientific results ignored. Multiple accounts of Omega reduction fleet breaking laws and damaging the

Chesapeake bay Eco system.

CommentID: **239525** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kody George

2/8/26 7:02 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239526** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robyn Brann

2/8/26 7:57 pm

**I do NOT support the petition.**

This company is a vital part of the Northern Neck and the community would suffer without it.

CommentID: **239527** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/8/26 8:19 pm

**I oppose this petition**

Fisheries policy should **driven by science** and **not the speculation of environmental activists**. The idea of stopping a historic Virginia fishery while studying the issue for years makes no sense. Current and best available science is what created the quotas for the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic coastal fishing. They should remain unchanged until science indicates there's a change needed.

CommentID: **239528** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/8/26 9:43 pm

**Petition against menhaden fishing**

I strongly oppose this petition!

CommentID: **239529** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Iris Fisher

2/9/26 2:22 am

**I do not support this petition!!**

I do NOT support this petition!!!

CommentID: **239530** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Preston Slaughter

2/9/26 5:04 am

**Ban of fishing in Bay**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239531** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Rowe

2/9/26 6:36 am

**I do not support.**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239532** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jimmy Kellum

2/9/26 6:38 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239533** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roberta Jones

2/9/26 8:17 am

**Petition**

I do not support this ban on commercial fishing!!

CommentID: **239534** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donnie Davis

2/9/26 8:22 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239535** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Willard Roberts

2/9/26 8:50 am

**Menhaden Fishing in Chesapeake Bay**

I emphatically disagree with this petition. Stop trying to cripple our hard working watermen.

CommentID: **239536** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shawn Rogers

2/9/26 9:57 am

**I do not support**

I do not support!!!

CommentID: **239537** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather Lunsford

2/9/26 11:19 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239539** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jane B. Crowther

2/9/26 11:36 am

**Do not support this needless petition!**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!

CommentID: **239540** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David J Huff

2/9/26 11:40 am

**I do not support this petition**

Do not support

CommentID: **239541** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/9/26 11:41 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239542** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carl Rice

2/9/26 11:42 am

**Menhaden**

I Do not support this.

CommentID: **239543** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris jones

2/9/26 11:43 am

**I do NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239544** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Bailey

2/9/26 11:46 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239545** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Crissy Mothershead

2/9/26 11:52 am

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239546** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emma Dameron

2/9/26 11:57 am

**Do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239547** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jabril Miller

2/9/26 11:57 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239548** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joseph Dickason

2/9/26 11:58 am

**Do Not Support**

I Don't support this petition

CommentID: **239549** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Casey Murrell

2/9/26 11:58 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS

CommentID: **239550** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Becky Hansen

2/9/26 11:59 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239551** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kaylie Cole

2/9/26 12:01 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239552** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve French

2/9/26 12:10 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this!

CommentID: **239553** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Cockrell

2/9/26 12:18 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239554** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Monta lee

2/9/26 12:20 pm

**Don't support**

Don't support

CommentID: **239555** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Monta

2/9/26 12:21 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239556** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/9/26 12:46 pm

**Dont support**

Dont support

CommentID: **239557** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joanne Hinson

2/9/26 2:11 pm

**Do NOT Support**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239559** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brandon Davis

2/9/26 2:13 pm

**DO NOT Support**

DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239560** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nick cockrell

2/9/26 2:26 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239561** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/9/26 2:36 pm

**Do NOT Support**

Do NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239562** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Reid Williams

2/9/26 2:40 pm

**Do NOT Support**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239563** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Dudley

2/9/26 3:21 pm

**Petition**

I DO NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239564** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Dudley

2/9/26 3:22 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239565** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dwayne Corsey

2/9/26 4:07 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support this petition

CommentID: **239566** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Luke Jennings

2/9/26 4:23 pm

**I do not support!!!**

Let them fish!!!

CommentID: **239567** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Barnes

2/9/26 4:23 pm

**I do not support**

Let the fish!!!!

CommentID: **239568** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trevor Brightwell

2/9/26 4:25 pm

**I do not support**

Let them fish!!!

CommentID: **239569** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Pj Haynie

2/9/26 4:27 pm

**I do not support**

Fisherman and farmers, we need our state government's support!!!!

CommentID: **239570** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jessie Sterrett

2/9/26 4:42 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition!!

CommentID: **239571** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Capt. John Smith

2/9/26 7:02 pm

**It's amazing how many fake "I do not support" comments there are.**

The way this comment section is set up makes the results worthless.

CommentID: **239572** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Niara Black

2/9/26 7:30 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

No one who fishes the Chesapeake Bay wants to see it harmed. Longtime watermen, recreational anglers, and conservationists all share the same goal: a healthy, productive bay for generations to come. The disagreement isn't about protection—it's about whether an outright ban on menhaden fishing in Virginia is necessary, effective, or fair.

I believe it is not. Everyone wants a healthy Chesapeake Bay, but banning menhaden fishing in Virginia is not the solution!

CommentID: **239573** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/9/26 8:39 pm

### **I do not support this petition**

Protecting the Bay means trusting the science, not rushing into symbolic bans. Virginia already has responsible menhaden management that works for both the ecosystem and the people.

CommentID: **239574** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brent Samuel

2/9/26 9:15 pm

### **Moratorium**

Stay 3 miles off shore. Moratorium til study

CommentID: **239575** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carlisle R Bannister

2/9/26 10:59 pm

### **I support this proposal**

It's about time the VMRC would take action on the harvesting of menhaden in the Bay and its tributaries.

I have been a recreational fisherman for most of my 82 years and seen a decline in the availability of many species in the bay and rivers.

I was happy to see VMRC take over the management the menhaden population in the bay. and now is the time to do it.

No other state that shares the bay allows this type of fishing, shouldn't VA take a page out of Maryland's book?

CommentID: **239576** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian McAvoy

2/10/26 6:09 am

### **I support this legislation**

I support this bill

CommentID: **239577** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Haynie

2/10/26 6:32 am

**Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239578** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelsey Haynie

2/10/26 6:33 am

**Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239579** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Sterrett

2/10/26 10:29 am

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition!!!

CommentID: **239580** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Blackwell

2/10/26 11:06 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT this petition**

Do not support

CommentID: **239581** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kristen Blackwell

2/10/26 11:07 am

**Do NOT support this petition**

Do Not support

CommentID: **239582** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charlotte Blackwell

2/10/26 11:08 am

**Do NOT support**

Do not support this petition

CommentID: **239583** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dawson Blackwell

2/10/26 11:08 am

**I DO NOT support**

Do not support this petition

CommentID: **239584** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** DALTON JEWELL

2/10/26 12:34 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239585** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Meredith Sterrett

2/10/26 1:56 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239586** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Taylor Deihl

2/10/26 2:39 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I urge the VMRC to reject this petition. This is the 3rd petition brought before the VMRC in the past two years. The previous two were rejected due to their clear intent to harm a historic industry that has been operating for 148 years. I encourage the Commissioners to continue to approach this issue with sound judgement. This fishery is already heavily regulated and responsibly managed, and the multigenerational workforce it employs should not be forced to repeatedly defend their livelihoods against unfounded claims.

CommentID: **239587** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jack Deihl

2/10/26 2:40 pm

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239588** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katherine Barrack

2/10/26 3:30 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239589** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Jones

2/10/26 3:32 pm

**Do NOT suppoorr**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239590** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kyle Jones

2/10/26 3:35 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239591** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/10/26 3:39 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239592** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather Klein

2/10/26 3:39 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239593** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve jones

2/10/26 3:39 pm

**Menhaden Fisheries**

I do not support this!! It would be very detrimental to our community to limit or eliminate the menhaden fishing!!

CommentID: **239594** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/10/26 3:40 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239595** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Daniels

2/10/26 4:33 pm

**I Do Not Support This Petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239596** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lily Daniels

2/10/26 4:46 pm

**Do NOT support**

Do NOT support

CommentID: **239597** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Maddy Kelly

2/10/26 4:48 pm

**Do NOT support**

Do NOT support

CommentID: **239598** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ryan Daniels

2/10/26 4:51 pm

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239599** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jessica Freeze

2/10/26 5:12 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT.**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239600** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Doug Freeze

2/10/26 5:14 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239601** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Debbie praytor

2/10/26 5:29 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239602** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Phil Ganious

2/10/26 5:40 pm

**Chesapeake bay menhaden reduction fishing**

I don't support this petition

CommentID: **239603** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shirley Hire

2/10/26 5:45 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I'm do not support this petition

CommentID: **239604** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/10/26 5:45 pm

**I agree**

I agree

CommentID: **239605** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Deihl

2/10/26 6:28 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239606** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Fawn Deihl

2/10/26 6:40 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239607** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/10/26 7:29 pm

**Menhaden reduction**

I do NOT support this.

CommentID: **239608** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karen Newsome

2/10/26 7:33 pm

**I do NOT support this**

I do NOT support this

CommentID: **239609** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Newsome

2/10/26 7:45 pm

**VMRC bill**

I do not support

CommentID: **239610** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matthew Harding

2/10/26 7:59 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239611** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ashley H. LaChance

2/10/26 8:39 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition!!!!

CommentID: **239612** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roger Smith

2/11/26 5:49 am

**Do not support**

Do not support!!

CommentID: **239614** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gail Bondutant

2/11/26 7:27 am

**I do not support this petition**

I totally DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION.

CommentID: **239615** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sirena Corsey

2/11/26 7:49 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239616** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Da'Janay Corsey

2/11/26 7:51 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239617** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tina Brown

2/11/26 7:51 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239618** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Arthur Jones Sr.

2/11/26 7:53 am

**do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239619** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Darryl Doggett

2/11/26 7:53 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!!

CommentID: **239620** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dwayne Corsey Jr.

2/11/26 7:54 am

**I do not support this.**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239621** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ray Raines

2/11/26 7:56 am

**i do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239622** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Deena Raines

2/11/26 7:57 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239623** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tommy Cole

2/11/26 7:57 am

**i do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239624** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Curtis B

2/11/26 7:59 am

**i do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239625** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Clarence Combs

2/11/26 8:00 am

**i do not support**

i do not support this.

CommentID: **239626** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Judd Richards

2/11/26 8:00 am

**i do not support**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239627** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dakota Carroll

2/11/26 8:01 am

**Do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239628** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Blake Toulson

2/11/26 8:01 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239629** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bailey Bucholz

2/11/26 8:02 am

**do NOT support**

I do NOT support

CommentID: **239630** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brice Buchotz

2/11/26 8:03 am

**I do not support**

I do NOT support

CommentID: **239631** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Randy Bowen

2/11/26 8:04 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239632** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Frame

2/11/26 8:05 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239633** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Billy Davis

2/11/26 8:05 am

**i do not support**

i do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239634** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Josh Miller

2/11/26 8:06 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239635** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Miller

2/11/26 8:06 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239636** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ches Bay Lovers

2/11/26 9:44 am

**We support this bill**

Menhaden are the most important fish in the Chesapeake Bay. Omega Protien is killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

CommentID: **239637** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Molly Dowless

2/11/26 10:03 am

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239638** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Franklin Dowless

2/11/26 10:40 am

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239640** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William H Turner II

2/11/26 11:50 am

### **Ospreys vs Corporate money**

Let me tell you quite simply. This is a choice of the Osprey's survival in the Bay, or the continuation of practices filling the chauffeurs of another greed-driven corporation. The opposers to this petition are economy and money focused only. We are in the middle of the Sixth major extinction event In earth's history, and again we are choosing between survival of a species or Corporate greed!

William H. Turner II

CommentID: **239641** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George M. Rew

2/11/26 12:02 pm

### **Menhaden fishing**

**I strongly oppose this petition. Menhaden fishing is a great part of the heritage of my community.**

CommentID: **239642** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** TaumHe

2/11/26 12:20 pm

### **Mehaden Reduction Petition**

I strongly support this petition.

CommentID: **239643** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bruce B

2/11/26 3:20 pm

### **Support for Moratorium**

I support implementing the moratorium now, pending further data to support a sustainable approach

CommentID: **239644** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Stacey Kitchen

2/11/26 7:14 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I DO NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239645** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/11/26 8:30 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239646** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Spencer

2/11/26 9:01 pm

**Reduce menhaden harvest**

I support eliminating commercial menhaden harvest within the chesapeake bay

CommentID: **239647** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Eileen Conboy

2/11/26 10:04 pm

**I do not agree with or support this petition**

I do not agree with or support this petition

CommentID: **239648** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kathleen W Pittman

2/12/26 5:34 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THE PETITION**

Please save our menhaden industry that has supported families for generations! I do not support your petition for bans. Omega does their research and would not intentionally harm other

resources. If you support this petition you will end up supporting families who normally support themselves with hard honest work. Thank you!

CommentID: **239649** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peter Rigterink

2/12/26 9:06 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.uug

CommentID: **239650** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Lewis

2/12/26 11:46 am

**I do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!

CommentID: **239651** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chad Dameron

2/12/26 11:48 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239652** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trevor Deihl

2/12/26 11:56 am

**I do not support this!**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239653** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gayle D. Dameron

2/12/26 12:16 pm

**I do not support this!**

My family has relied on this fishery for over 5 generations. I have watch my Father in-law, Husband, son and grandson support their families through this fishery forever. The family has been fishing for over 100 years.

CommentID: **239654** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Joan Millward, Virginia Osprey Foundation

2/12/26 12:35 pm

**We support this petition**

Atlantic Menhaden are a keystone forage fish. They are essential to the health of the Bay and to species Virginians care deeply about, Ospreys and many others. When Menhaden decline, the entire food web feels the impact. Right now, we do not have Bay specific, precautionary science that demonstrates industrial reduction fishing can continue without risk. Until we have that science, there should be a pause in Industrial reduction fishing for Atlantic Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay at the very least, and ultimately in Virginia waters. This is not about eliminating jobs or closing a fishery. It is about protecting a shared public resource and ensuring decisions are grounded in sound science rather than uncertainty. When science is lacking, caution is the responsible choice. The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are too important to gamble with. We support this petition and urge you to accept it in its entirety.

CommentID: **239655** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** W R Davenport

2/12/26 12:38 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS****I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS!!!**CommentID: **239656** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** John Bello

2/12/26 12:48 pm

**Pause the industrial Menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake BAY**

I support this action. NOAA has been allocated money to study the menhaden population in the bay and there is a bill in the General Assembly to fund a VIMS study. This action will not put them out of business, they can still fish in the ocean.

CommentID: **239657** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy Dodson

2/12/26 12:59 pm

**Do NOT support**

DO NOT SUPPORT THIS!

CommentID: **239658** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Johnny boothe

2/12/26 1:02 pm

**Do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL FOCUS ON THE POLLUTION IN THE POTOMAC

CommentID: **239659** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Luna Nordstrom

2/12/26 1:03 pm

**We SUPPORT this petition**

We support this petition.

CommentID: **239660** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peter Michael Mecca

2/12/26 1:11 pm

**I support the bill.**

I support the bill.

CommentID: **239661** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheryl Jordan

2/12/26 1:15 pm

**I SUPPORT THIS PETITION!!**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239662** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Nicholas Szobota

2/12/26 1:19 pm

**I support this.**

I support this.

CommentID: **239663** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenneth Hebert

2/12/26 1:26 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I Do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239664** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peter Fahrney

2/12/26 1:40 pm

**Support moratorium on menhaden fishing**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239665** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Barry Millward

2/12/26 2:02 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239666** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joyce Reid

2/12/26 2:06 pm

**I support this petition.**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239667** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** H. Spencer, voter and taxpayer

2/12/26 2:14 pm

**Support for petition**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239668** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lisa Callahan

2/12/26 2:22 pm

**Pause menhaden reduction fishing in the Chesapeake Bay**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239669** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 2:53 pm

**Menhaden bill**

I certainly support

CommentID: **239670** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Russell Minich

2/12/26 2:55 pm

**We SUPPORT this petition**

We support a moratorium on menhaden fishing to enable the fish population to re-establish thereby reestablishing a fundamental part of the food chain in the Chesapeake Bay. Over harvesting has gone on way too long in Virginia, specifically in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239671** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kennedy Daniels

2/12/26 2:55 pm

**Menhaden bill**

I'm in full support

CommentID: **239672** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aletha Grugan Redd

2/12/26 2:56 pm

**I support a moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Fishing while a stock study is completed.**

I support a moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Fishing while a stock study is completed.

CommentID: **239673** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 3:01 pm

**I support this petition to pause menhaden fishing for a study period.**

I support this petition to pause menhaden fishing for a study period.

CommentID: **239674** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 3:28 pm

**I support this Bill**

I support this bill

CommentID: **239675** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Margaret Britvec

2/12/26 3:37 pm

**I support this bill!**

I support this bill!

CommentID: **239676** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Siracusa

2/12/26 5:01 pm

**I do not support**

This would put hard working Virginians out of work.

CommentID: **239677** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lee Robbins

2/12/26 5:02 pm

**I strongly disagree with this petition, puts people out of work!**

I strongly disagree with this petition. I have been a Captain since 1997 and working on the boats since I graduated high school in 1982. There are only 6 boats fishing on the entire East Coast! When I first Captained a boat in 1997 there were 22 boats fishing in Reedville Va. The industry has a bay quota and a coastal quota now in place. We just took a 20 percent reduction in our Coastal quota and to not be able to catch our Bay quota is just unacceptable to me, my crew and my community. I'm all for the science. I can tell you from experience that there is no shortage of menhaden. Last season was a usually bad season which you are going to have those from time to time. There was an unusually large amount of young menhaden in the Bay this past season. That shows that the spawn was very successful and I expect are large turnout in the coming seasons. Thank you

CommentID: **239678** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** cindy ligon

2/12/26 5:04 pm

**I support this**

I support this

CommentID: **239679** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roxann Siracusa

2/12/26 5:11 pm

**I do not support**

Leave them alone!!!! 150 year old industry.

CommentID: **239680** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 5:21 pm

**Menhaden**

I do not support the petition to end menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay!

CommentID: **239681** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith Swift

2/12/26 5:53 pm

**NO**

I do NOT support this

CommentID: **239682** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Avery VSSA

2/12/26 6:01 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239683** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Paul Haynie, Sr.

2/12/26 6:09 pm

**Pertaining to Atlantic Menhaden [4 VAC 20 ? 1270]**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!

CommentID: **239684** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob

2/12/26 6:15 pm

**I fully support this**

Follow existing regulation already on the books. They are overfishing the Bay!!

CommentID: **239685** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark S Williams

2/12/26 6:16 pm

**I support the petition.**

I support the petition. Stop a foreign company from depleting our natural resources.

CommentID: **239686** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kazuki Ko

2/12/26 6:17 pm

**In support**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239687** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 6:38 pm

**I support the petition.**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239688** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anne H Haynie

2/12/26 6:39 pm

**Menhaden Moritorium**

I do not support the Bill on Morotorium of Menhaden Fishery.

CommentID: **239689** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 7:11 pm

**I support the petition - Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fishing**

I strongly support this petition. This isn't rocket science. Open your eyes and use some common sense.

CommentID: **239690** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 7:19 pm

**I DO NOT Support this Petition**

The petitioners frequently misrepresent fact and regulation, cite studies that are nonconclusive as to cause, and rely more on social media hype than the science that has led the current quotas.

The establishment of Atlantic and Bay quotas were developed with best available science for decades. As the best available science matured quotas have been amended. This is the system that works and should continue to work. A complete moratorium in purse seine fishing BEFORE science indicates there is that need, if ever, is reckless and irresponsible. Federal and State agencies have applied science for the basis of recommended changes and should continue to do so.

**Absolutely oppose this petition and recommend VMRC reject it.**

CommentID: **239691** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 7:25 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition for the temporary moratorium for the reduction fishery of Menhaden by purse seine technique in the Chesapeake Bay.

I have personally witnessed the dramatic reduction in the appearance of menhaden and striped bass in the Bay to the point that I did not see a single school of striped bass feeding on the surface on a menhaden school this entire year of fishing and boating. This cannot be normal. Striped bass are at a historically, low number and their primary food forage is menhaden, which is being aggressively overfished. Please grant the above stated petition.

The current reduction fishery out of Reedville VA can continue to fish outside of the Chesapeake Bay so that this moratorium will not close down the fishery. It will just limit its location to outside the Bay.

Thank you!!!

CommentID: **239692** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** The Concordia Group, Inc.

2/12/26 7:47 pm

**I support this moratorium**

I support this moratorium

CommentID: **239693** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/12/26 7:57 pm

**Menhaden petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239694** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Julie Kacmarcik

2/12/26 8:06 pm

**I support this petition**

It is the responsibility of the citizens of VA and decision-making bodies to maintain the health of the ECOSYSTEM of the Chesapeake Bay. Menhaden are a public resource. Stop the industrial reduction menhaden fishing in VA. The only state on the east coast to allow this fishing.

CommentID: **239695** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lee Ceperich

2/12/26 8:10 pm

### Save the Bay!

I support a moratorium on menhaden fishing in the Bay and VA state waters. No other state allows it. The Bay ecosystem is separate from the Atlantic Ocean. The current level of Harvest from VA waters is not sustainable. Industrial fishing needs to occur in the Ocean three miles offshore.

CommentID: **239696** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bob Schepker

2/12/26 8:10 pm

### I support this petition

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239697** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joshua Ketnor

2/12/26 8:12 pm

### Petition

I DO NOT support this

CommentID: **239698** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zach Hall

2/12/26 8:20 pm

### I do not support this petition

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239699** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Abby Hall

2/12/26 8:21 pm

### I do not support this petition

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239700** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah Bagby

2/12/26 8:30 pm

**I support the petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239701** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheri George

2/12/26 8:45 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239702** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kody George

2/12/26 8:46 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239703** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenny George

2/12/26 8:47 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239704** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Travis rice

2/12/26 9:01 pm

**I do not support this bill**

Chesapeake bay foundation should focus more on the sewage spills and pollution in the bay rather put a 150 year old company out of business and destroy lives in the northern neck of Va!

CommentID: **239705** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Rowley

2/12/26 9:07 pm

**Menhaden over fishing**

I support 100% limiting commercial fishing for Menhaden in all Virginia waters. This needs to stop before it's too late.

CommentID: **239706** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joshua Verdin

2/12/26 9:34 pm

**I do not support This Bill**

As a former spotter pilot, I do not support this bill!

CommentID: **239707** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hunter Pickett

2/12/26 9:45 pm

**Menhaden Bill.**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239708** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lisa Morales

2/12/26 10:25 pm

**Moratorium on fishing**

I support the moratorium. Please.

CommentID: **239709** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** delk\_smith@msn.com

2/12/26 10:53 pm

**Tired of Democrats run government**

I don't support this! This unduly hampers fishermen.

CommentID: **239710** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 12:01 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239711** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Billy Fones

2/13/26 6:01 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

You would be taking jobs away from a lot of people in a rural community.

CommentID: **239712** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Debbie Oder

2/13/26 6:50 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239713** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gerald Mayer

2/13/26 7:49 am

**I support this legislation**

Omega and Cooke industries can afford to move the limited miles it takes to fish in the ocean. They need to stop stealing resources from here and shipping them all over the world. Local waterman and guides bring in more tax revenue and keep the money local than what Omega is producing for the state of Virginia. Once they have depleted the bay and cause irreversible harm, Omega will leave and we the people of Virginia will be left to clean up their mess

CommentID: **239714** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Evan Quinter

2/13/26 8:06 am

**I support this petition**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **239715** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roy Crocker

2/13/26 8:07 am

**I support this**

I support this

CommentID: **239716** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeff Stonehill

2/13/26 8:12 am

**I DO SUPPORT..about time for this!**

This effects the entire east coast. Do not let a Canadian company take our very important bay fish for their fish farms in Canada!

CommentID: **239717** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cole Basye

2/13/26 9:05 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239718** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 9:17 am

**I support this bill!**

The decimation of the Osprey, a sentinel indicator of marine health, is an environmental catastrophe.

CommentID: **239719** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 9:53 am

**Petition**

I support this petition!

CommentID: **239720** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lee Martin

2/13/26 9:54 am

**I support this bill.**

I support this bill. It is time that the State of Virginia bans reduction fishing within three miles of our coastline.

CommentID: **239721** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** charles adcock

2/13/26 9:58 am

**i support this bill**

i support this bill

CommentID: **239722** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Diane J

2/13/26 10:14 am

**I support this bill. Please do the right thing to save the Chesapeake Bay.**

I support this bill. Please do the right thing to save the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **239723** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Germain C

2/13/26 10:45 am

**I support this Bill!**

I support any and all conservation measures to protect Menhaden, this species is the keystone species of the East coast and so many other animals/fish species rely on Menhaden. The entire ecosystem collapse would happen if there were not Menhaden on the East coast. Please side with conservation to protect Menhaden.

CommentID: **239724** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wes W

2/13/26 10:46 am

**Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay**

I support this petition. Something needs to happen NOW, not years from now.

CommentID: **239725** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** PATRICK CARROLL Carroll's Automotive

2/13/26 10:57 am

**I SUPPORT THIS BILL**

Why is Va., having a such hard time figuring out the problem with over harvesting of the menhaden

Every other state is showing the benefits of restrictions

And we have the biggest nursesey on the coast

WAKE UP VIRGINIA

CommentID: **239726** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 11:04 am

?????? ?????? ?????????????????? ?????????????????????? ?????????? ??????????????????  
???????? ?????????????????????????????!

**NO FOREIGN COUNTRY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RAPE THE CHESAPEAKE BAY.**

**BAN THEM TO SAVE THE CHESAPEAKE**

**SPAMBERGER TOOK AT 50K DONATION / BRIBE FROM THEM**

CommentID: **239727** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chad Koenig- Dog Days Charters.

2/13/26 11:04 am

**100% support protecting menhaden.**

Totally support this bill

CommentID: **239728** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Tweeddale

2/13/26 11:33 am

**I support this bill**

Menhaden are a vital food source for aquatic life in the Chesapeake Bay. Overfishing menhaden threatens the entire marine food chain in the bay.

CommentID: **239729** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Lundy

2/13/26 11:34 am

### **Stop the Menhaden Slaughter**

I support this bill. The overfishing of Menhaden for fish oil is doing irreversible damage to the Bay.

CommentID: **239730** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve Hill

2/13/26 11:36 am

### **Save the Menhaden please**

I have been fishing Chesapeake bay, Lower Potomac, Mobjack Bay, Elizabeth River and all surrounding tributaries in my kayak for 20 plus years and have seen a very large depopulation of Menhaden population. There used to be huge schools and baitballs everywhere, now they are occasional. There's no doubt the over netting has put a hurt on them. Please stop Omega, Please

CommentID: **239731** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kyle Spruill

2/13/26 11:39 am

### **Save the Menhaden!**

The lack of a proper study inside the Chesapeake Bay is a gross failure of management. Let them fish the Atlantic while a Bay study is conducted. Ensuring the overall health of the biomass. Which would allow the fish to support BOTH commercial and recreational fishing for generations to come.

CommentID: **239732** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 11:44 am

### **Do NOT Support this Petition**

Shutting down a 150-year-old, sustainably managed fishery without scientific justification would needlessly harm working families and the coastal community while doing nothing to improve Bay ecology. Sound management must follow evidence, not unfounded claims, and the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that menhaden fishing remains sustainable and responsibly managed.

CommentID: **239733** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matt Smith

2/13/26 11:45 am

**I support this!**

I have personally witnessed Omega protein destroying our waters. Once they leave an area it takes weeks for the fishing to return to normal. All while recreational fisherman are hammered with small bag limits, slot sizing on several species, and overall poor fishing compared to years past.

CommentID: **239734** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donnie Davis

2/13/26 11:47 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT.**

I do not support this. You will put people out of work in this small community.

CommentID: **239735** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Delamain

2/13/26 11:52 am

**Omega Protein**

I believe we need to pause the industrial menhaden fishery until such time as Cooke Bros/Omega Protein can prove they are not damaging the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Va should follow the lead of other east coast states and limit the fishing to 3mi off the coast and none in the bay

CommentID: **239736** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joe Thorpe

2/13/26 11:52 am

**Save The Menhaden**

I support this petition. Save the Menhaden.

CommentID: **239737** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Hardman

2/13/26 12:29 pm

**Please help save the Chesapeake Bay**

Please stop reduction fishing in the Chesapeake Bay

CommentID: **239738** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Victor D'Amato

2/13/26 12:38 pm

**I support this petition wholeheartedly**

The State of Virginia and the VMRC have consistently kicked the can down the road as it relates to menhaden harvest in the Chesapeake Bay, so unfortunately, this petition to impose a temporary moratorium on such harvest is sorely needed. This is a very compelling petition whose facts do not appear to be in question. It should be accepted and implemented.

CommentID: **239739** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** S. Pollock

2/13/26 12:47 pm

**Save the Menhaden**

I support this petition. Save the menhaden and all wildlife that depend on them for their survival.

CommentID: **239740** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 12:52 pm

**I support the bill to manage the Menhaden harvest responsibly**

I support the bill to manage the menhaden harvest responsibly.

CommentID: **239741** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wade Beauchamp

2/13/26 12:55 pm

**I support this petition**

At one time the bay was crystal clear. seagrass beds everywhere. Oyster beds 5 to 6 feet above the water line. Monster rockfish and bluefish. Seagrass is gone bluefish are gone and the rockfish are dwindling. Why? Outlying growth is one reason, but mostly because the commercial fishing industry has basically wiped out the two biggest water filters the bay has and needs. Oysters and menhaden. The bay needs a break. Omega Protein needs to go back to Canada.

CommentID: **239742** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ross Kellum

2/13/26 1:01 pm

### **Do not support this petition.**

I do not support the passage of this petition. It is absurd to place a moratorium on a fishery that is not overfished and that overfishing is not occurring. There is no scientific or economic basis for such a petition. Once again, this only amounts to a targeted attack against Omega Protein/Ocean Harvestors and has nothing at all to do with actual conservation or ecological necessity.

CommentID: **239743** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Blackburn, Northern Virginia Bird Alliance

2/13/26 1:02 pm

### **Please grant the petition and save the Bay's ecosystem**

I am the Chair of the Advocacy Committee of the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance, 5,500-member chapter of the National Audubon Society whose members live in the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, Spotsylvania, and Rappahannock, and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, Fairfax, Vienna, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Leesburg,

On behalf of NVBA, I urge you to vote for the moratorium, which will protect the Chesapeake Bay's stock of menhaden and stop the starvation of Ospreys in the lower Chesapeake.

The largest population of Osprey on the planet is located in the Chesapeake Bay. However, that population is in serious danger because nesting failures are greater than at any time since records have been kept, including during the "Silent Spring" era of widespread DDT spraying. Menhaden are the principal food of Osprey in the lower Chesapeake, and the widespread starvation of chicks and adults has been linked to the lack of availability of menhaden.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission released a stock assessment in October 2025 finding that the Atlantic Coast menhaden population was 37% smaller than the

previous assessment, indicating a rapid decline in the population. The steep decline in the menhaden population has implications for the entire Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Menhaden are a high protein forage fish that are at the bottom of the food chain. Many marine species rely on them, including striped bass (rockfish), bluefish, summer flounder and other species sought by both commercial and recreational fishing. The reduction in the number of menhaden is hurting catches of these fish, harming the livelihoods of commercial fishing operations, including day boats catering to recreational fishing parties. The entire Bay ecosystem is threatened by the loss of menhaden.

In addition, the reduction in menhaden may become permanent if the population reaches a tipping point from which it cannot recover. Shad used to be fished from the Potomac River in huge quantities -- up to 50,000 tons in one 8-week migration run. It used to be said that the supply of shad was inexhaustible -- but it wasn't. Shad were overfished, and they have never recovered despite years of efforts. Similarly, the Northwest Atlantic Cod fishery has collapsed because of overfishing and is likely to never recover. We need to adopt a moratorium on menhaden reduction fishing until we fully understand the menhaden population and determine a sustainable level of taking or we risk losing that fish forever.

CommentID: **239744** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Phil Zalesak, Southern Maryland Recreational Fishing Organization

2/13/26 1:20 pm

### **End all Atlantic menhaden industrial reduction harvesting in ALL VIRGINIA WATERS**

Omega Protein is overharvesting Atlantic menhaden in both the Chesapeake Bay and its entrance. Overharvesting of menhaden results in the starvation of economically important predator fish like striped bass, and birds like osprey which are dependent on menhaden for their survival. When there are insufficient menhaden in the marine ecosystem, striped bass and osprey starve to death.

Overharvesting menhaden has resulted in billions of dollars of lost revenue and thousands of jobs in the US fishing industry for both commercial bait fishermen and recreational fishermen along the Atlantic Coast. It has also resulted in an ecological disaster in the Chesapeake Bay.

Omega Protein is a subsidiary of Cooke Seafood, an international corporation headquartered in Canada. Omega Protein is the last remaining industrial reduction fishery on the Atlantic Coast. The company uses aircraft to spot schools of fish and purse seine nets to harvest entire schools of fish.

The VMRC is in violation of Virginia law as it has allocated 90% of its total Atlantic menhaden quota to Omega Protein to the detriment of Virginia and Maryland commercial bait fishermen and recreational fishermen. This clearly a "Canada First" fishing policy.

The solution to this problem is to end all industrial reduction harvesting in Virginia waters as the decline in the US fishing industry and marine ecology is ongoing.

CommentID: **239745** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paul Eidman Menhaden Defenders

2/13/26 1:28 pm

**We Support this Moratorium - Keep Omega outside the 3-mile line!**

Let the Bay Heal!

CommentID: **239746** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mitch Kellum

2/13/26 1:31 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239747** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/13/26 1:33 pm

**I support this petition. 3 mile limit.**

I support this petition, 3 mile limit,

CommentID: **239748** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Frank Ambrose

2/13/26 1:35 pm

**No more menhaden reduction fishing in VA waters**

Please join with every other state on the eastern coast in stopping bunker reduction fishing in the Chesapeake bay and costal waters. This will allow the adult bunker population to rebound, providing forage for valuable sport and commercial fish such as striped bass red drum and cobia.. it will also provide more food opportunities for Osprey, which are in decline due ck of food. to la

CommentID: **239749** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jerry Leuters

2/13/26 2:03 pm

### **Menhaden Petition**

I Fully support this petition

CommentID: **239750** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jared vann

2/13/26 2:43 pm

**I support**

I fully support

CommentID: **239751** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tien Tran

2/13/26 3:01 pm

### **Closing down the menhaden fishery in the Baybe ban**

For the long-term impact. Stop menhaden commercial harvest should be ban.

CommentID: **239752** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jameson Crandall

2/13/26 3:23 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition!

CommentID: **239753** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Golembicki

2/13/26 3:26 pm

**I support the ban**

They can fish out in the Atlantic past the 3 mile limit. All it does is raise their operational costs, it's not the end of the industry.

CommentID: **239754** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Cathy

2/13/26 3:37 pm

**I do not support this bill.**

I do not support

CommentID: **239755** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** John Deihl

2/13/26 4:08 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239756** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Christi Medice

2/13/26 5:41 pm

**I fully support this petition**

We, the residents of Silver Beach, have been fighting the Industrial Commercial Fishing which is happening in the Chesapeake Bay. After a spill of dead fish at Silver Beach 3 years ago, we have sent letters to the local and federal government agencies, started a huge support system which covers from North Carolina to New York State, we have gotten the word out to other states, attended VMRC meetings to share our concerns and also have traveled to several places in Virginia. The problem is this...the politicians we have attempted to speak with continue to turn their heads and look the other way. Because of the Disinterested Politicians, we are still finding ourselves spinning a wheel that never gets the traction it needs to move forward.

The Chesapeake Bay is heading towards an irreversible collapse if we do not do something now!

This is one of the FEW lifelines the residents of the Eastern Shore and beyond have to keep up running as a community. Will you PLEASE hear us out!!!!

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

CommentID: **239757** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sherre Christiansen

2/13/26 5:47 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition to protect the Chesapeake Bay, it's tributaries, and wetlands.

CommentID: **239758** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peggy

2/13/26 7:29 pm

**I support petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239759** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Janer

2/14/26 7:17 am

**Support of menhaden harvest limit bill**

Please support this action to help our water ways ecosystem.

CommentID: **239760** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gerald Mayer

2/14/26 7:36 am

**I support this**

This needs to be done to protect the waterman and sportfish of VA and Maryland. Omega is shipping our resources for profit out of VA. They can go out to the 3mile mark and fish. Lets save the bay.

CommentID: **239761** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** ROC

2/14/26 8:16 am

**I support**

I support

CommentID: **239762** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jean Buergler

2/14/26 9:09 am

**I support this petition**

Please support this petition to stop harvesting the menhaden. Our Ospreys need it to survive.

CommentID: **239763** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dave Scanlon

2/14/26 9:40 am

**Menhaden**

I do not support. Bill is discriminating against a single organization without facts.

CommentID: **239764** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chad Koenig

2/14/26 9:54 am

**I support**

I support. Get Omega out.

CommentID: **239765** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** E Nelson

2/14/26 9:56 am

**I support this petition**

I support this petition to promote the health of the Bay

CommentID: **239766** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jennifer Grimes

2/14/26 10:34 am

**moratorium on menhaden fishing in VA waters.**

I support the moratorium on menhaden fishing in VA waters.

CommentID: **239767** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ben Harrington

2/14/26 11:03 am

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **239768** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lori Wagman

2/14/26 11:46 am

**I approve this petition**

As a recreational fisherman, we have seen a sharp decline in the sport fish that rely on Menhaden. So I am for the moratorium.

CommentID: **239769** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Gebhardt

2/14/26 1:03 pm

**I'm in favor for a moratorium for at least a year**

I'm in favor for a moratorium for at least a year

CommentID: **239770** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/14/26 1:14 pm

### **I Support this petition**

I am 72 years old. I have seen the schools Menhaden Decrease significantly over my lifetime and with them the other fish that feed on them. I am also concerned that without them as filter feeders the water quality of Chesapeake Bay will also be affected. Please stop purse seining.

Thank you,

John Popow

CommentID: **239771** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Popow

2/14/26 1:17 pm

### **Support**

Support

CommentID: **239772** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Leslie

2/14/26 1:38 pm

### **I support...keep them out of State Waters!**

Odd how the ONLY two states that allow Omega to fish in state waters are Virginia and Louisiana? Both states have an Omega plant there on their shores. How much money is being paid to local politicians to keep that going?

CommentID: **239773** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dan Zivi

2/14/26 2:06 pm

### **I strongly support**

I am a life long Chesapeake Bay fisherman. The lack of menhaden in our area is very apparent. Our local osprey are also not finding enough to eat.

CommentID: **239774** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tony Barbini

2/14/26 2:14 pm

**End it**

Stop killing the bay

CommentID: **239775** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tim Berlett

2/14/26 3:25 pm

**Restore this resource**

I grew up on the bay in Maryland, lived in Virginia. Been fishing the Eastern Shore for 30 years. Watched the days of catching game fish in the surf get to be fewer and fewer. These fish cannot afford to hang out in Virginia or they will starve to death.

CommentID: **239776** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kat Romain

2/14/26 3:51 pm

**I fully support**

I fully support banning purse seining in the Bay.

CommentID: **239777** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dannielle heim

2/14/26 3:56 pm

**I fully support**

I fully support banning all menhaden fishing in Virginia state waters

CommentID: **239778** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brenda Nordgren

2/14/26 6:59 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition. We need to reduce the amount of menhaden being taken from the bay. There needs to be balance.

CommentID: **239779** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/14/26 7:46 pm

### **DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

There's a system in place to manage the Menhaden stock along the entire Atlantic coast, including the Chesapeake Bay. The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. The bay quota has been set by Federal regulations and monitored by VMRC. Only when science indicates revision is necessary should they mess with it.

CommentID: **239780** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Wack

2/14/26 8:24 pm

### **I support the Petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **239781** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Gimbel IV

2/14/26 8:58 pm

### **I support this**

I support this, the Chesapeake and it's tributaries are being directly affected by the over fishing of menhaden, not to mention the by catch kill is a ridiculous waste of fish.

CommentID: **239782** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Thompson

2/14/26 9:20 pm

### **Menhaden Petition**

Strongly support this.

CommentID: **239783** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Tyson

2/14/26 10:30 pm

### **I support this petition**

It's time to end the taking of menhaden from the bay!

CommentID: **239784** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ashley Taylor

2/15/26 1:46 am

### **Stop Omega**

The Chesapeake Bay is worth protecting. Omega is hurting fisheries and people who rely on them.

CommentID: **239785** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brook Hughe

2/15/26 7:03 am

### **I am against this bill and anyone who supports it**

The title says it all, fishing companies and techniques like Omega should be banned from fishing in the bay.

CommentID: **239786** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Boz Barrick

2/15/26 10:29 am

### **Suppot**

I fully support this petition, as a Virginia citizen residing on one of our beautiful waterways.

CommentID: **239787** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jake Hayes

2/15/26 1:47 pm

**I don't support**

This company has helped myself and my family!!!! Leave us alone.

CommentID: **239788** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeff Hayes

2/15/26 1:49 pm

**I do not support**

Let them work!!! I thought the governor was for rural Virginia!!!

CommentID: **239789** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Fawn deihl

2/15/26 1:49 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239790** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gracey Dameron

2/15/26 1:50 pm

**I do not support.**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239791** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carter Deihl

2/15/26 1:51 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239792** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Clay Dameron

2/15/26 1:53 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239793** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:00 pm

**I do not support**

I love loaded shad wagons

CommentID: **239794** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Morgan Gooch

2/15/26 2:05 pm

**I do not support**

Don't support

CommentID: **239795** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sara Pierce

2/15/26 2:06 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239796** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rob Pierce

2/15/26 2:06 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239797** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Diane Pierce

2/15/26 2:07 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239798** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Grace Pierce

2/15/26 2:07 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239799** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Newsome

2/15/26 2:08 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239800** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Pierce

2/15/26 2:08 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239801** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carol Minor

2/15/26 2:09 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239802** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Adam Crockett

2/15/26 2:10 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239803** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bailey Loving

2/15/26 2:11 pm

**Please DO NOT regulate menhaden any further erroneously.**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239804** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emma Dameron

2/15/26 2:12 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239805** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Pete Haynie

2/15/26 2:14 pm

**The governor doesn't support this!!!**

Part of the governors platform was good jobs in rural areas. Ocean harvesters and Omega has done this for 150 years.

CommentID: **239806** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jervall kelly

2/15/26 2:16 pm

**I don't support**

I don't support

CommentID: **239807** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ian Vanlandingham

2/15/26 2:17 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239808** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:20 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

Just like global warming, no real science supporting this. Just a bunch of people who don't live here. Clean up the sewage from Nova and Maryland that polluting the rivers first

CommentID: **239809** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:20 pm

**Menhaden**

Do not support

CommentID: **239810** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carlton Revere

2/15/26 2:22 pm

**Proposed Menhaden fishing moratorium's**

I do not support a moratorium that is not upheld by scientific data.

CommentID: **239811** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trystin

2/15/26 2:23 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239812** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dwayne Waters

2/15/26 2:26 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239813** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aleman Omar

2/15/26 2:28 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

Do not support

CommentID: **239814** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrew thompson

2/15/26 2:31 pm

**I SUPPORT THIS**

I support this bill

CommentID: **239815** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steward Noel

2/15/26 2:32 pm

**Menhaden fishing**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239816** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:39 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do Not support

CommentID: **239817** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:43 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239818** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mirga Jazbutis

2/15/26 2:43 pm

**I support temporary Moratorium on reduction fishing**

I support a temporary Moratorium on reduction fishing. Menhaden are critical to the lives of ospreys and bald eagles in the Chesapeake Bay. Selfish corporate interests are endangering our precious irreplaceable wildlife by removing their food supply. Go chase your dollars somewhere else.

CommentID: **239819** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anjelica Crockett

2/15/26 2:45 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239820** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jack Jett

2/15/26 2:51 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239821** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 2:52 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT!**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239822** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robin Jett

2/15/26 2:53 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239823** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Marston

2/15/26 2:53 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239824** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah M

2/15/26 2:54 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239825** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lauren H

2/15/26 3:00 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239826** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Toni Wilczewski

2/15/26 3:03 pm

**I support a temporary moratorium on reduction fishing**

I support a temporary moratorium on reduction fishing. Menhaden are critical to the lives of ospreys and bald eagles in the Chesapeake Bay. Selfish corporate interests are endangering out precious irreplaceable wildlife by removing their food supply..

CommentID: **239827** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** George Ball

2/15/26 3:19 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239828** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ocassa Thompson

2/15/26 3:20 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **239829** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Wondson

2/15/26 3:21 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239830** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jackie Clayton

2/15/26 3:22 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this proposed bill

CommentID: **239831** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lorin Richardson

2/15/26 3:23 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239832** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Juanita Ball

2/15/26 3:24 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239833** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roberta Ball

2/15/26 3:27 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239834** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Betty Ball

2/15/26 3:28 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239835** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Diane SHACKLEFORD

2/15/26 3:29 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239836** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve Minor

2/15/26 3:35 pm

**I do not support.**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239837** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Stephanie Hudson

2/15/26 3:43 pm

**Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **239838** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ed Harper

2/15/26 3:47 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239839** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tyler Jones

2/15/26 3:48 pm

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239840** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alex Rogers

2/15/26 3:50 pm

**I support this petition**

Used to love in Virginia. Still watch the wildlife there. I'm tired of seeing birds dying because there is no fish for them to eat or feed their young. Very few fledglings from Virginia in the past few years.

CommentID: **239841** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Freddy Cradle

2/15/26 3:56 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support petition

CommentID: **239842** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donald Jewell

2/15/26 4:01 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239843** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Julia Self

2/15/26 4:13 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239844** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Devon Wittman Gooch

2/15/26 4:18 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill.

CommentID: **239845** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Justin Bowis

2/15/26 4:26 pm

**I do not support!**

I do not support!

CommentID: **239846** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Scotty George

2/15/26 4:35 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239847** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kathy Schuder

2/15/26 4:52 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239848** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rachel Hinson

2/15/26 4:52 pm

**I do not Support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239849** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David S Robinson Jr

2/15/26 4:53 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239850** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 4:55 pm

**Do not support**

Do Not support

CommentID: **239851** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donna Anderson

2/15/26 4:56 pm

**I do NOT support the petition as written**

I believe the petition as it is written, with the requirements noted, is unrealistic. I too want to protect our marine environment, but this is not the way to do this. I live on the water in the Northern Neck.

CommentID: **239852** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Pamela D Chapman

2/15/26 4:57 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239853** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shelley

2/15/26 5:00 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239854** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 5:03 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239855** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lindsay Robinson

2/15/26 5:04 pm

**I do not support this!**

Do not support this.

CommentID: **239856** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tiffany Fischer

2/15/26 5:04 pm

**Do Not Support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239857** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jacqueline Jones

2/15/26 5:04 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239858** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kathleen Connolly

2/15/26 5:08 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239859** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steven Shelton

2/15/26 5:11 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239860** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 5:17 pm

**Petition for Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden**

I DO NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **239861** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jerry Hampton

2/15/26 5:23 pm

**I DO NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239862** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William saunders

2/15/26 5:30 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239863** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Jett

2/15/26 6:14 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239864** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paige Kellum

2/15/26 6:15 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239865** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Kellum

2/15/26 6:15 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239866** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Doug Bishoff

2/15/26 6:18 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239867** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jimmy Luck

2/15/26 6:29 pm

**I do not support.**

I do not support!

CommentID: **239868** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Len Pittman

2/15/26 6:33 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239869** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rachel Cauley

2/15/26 6:34 pm

**Do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239870** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Jones

2/15/26 6:46 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239871** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jake hayes

2/15/26 6:48 pm

**I do not support**

I do NOT support this.

CommentID: **239872** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kayla Price

2/15/26 6:54 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239873** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lou Shelton

2/15/26 6:58 pm

**Chesapeake Bay Menhaden reduction fishing**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239874** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Whitney Shelton

2/15/26 7:00 pm

**I Do not support!!!**

I do not support!!!

CommentID: **239875** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Danielle Price

2/15/26 7:00 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239876** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kim Hampton

2/15/26 7:01 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239877** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Melissa Thrift

2/15/26 7:09 pm

**Do not Support**

I cannot support a bill that has no founded claims and hurts people's livelihood based on what ifs. The stock has been proven time and again to be stable and is regulated more harshly than any other industry already.

CommentID: **239878** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cammeron Harris

2/15/26 7:18 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239879** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Macy McNamee

2/15/26 7:21 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239880** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rosie Packett

2/15/26 7:24 pm

**I DO NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239881** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brooke Brandt

2/15/26 7:25 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239882** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Parker Deihl

2/15/26 7:28 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support

CommentID: **239883** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karla Smith

2/15/26 7:29 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support

CommentID: **239884** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tiffany Perry

2/15/26 7:29 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I am a Virginia voter and taxpayer from Reedville, and I do not support this petition for rulemaking to establish a temporary moratorium on Chesapeake Bay menhaden reduction fishing.

CommentID: **239885** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Orry Harrison

2/15/26 7:30 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support

CommentID: **239886** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Haley Deihl

2/15/26 7:30 pm

**I do NOT support this**

I DO NOT support this!

CommentID: **239887** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dylan Hall

2/15/26 7:31 pm

**I don not support.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239888** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matthew Perry

2/15/26 7:31 pm

**Do not support**

I am a Virginia voter and taxpayer and I do not support this petition for rulemaking to establish a temporary moratorium on Chesapeake Bay menhaden reduction fishing.

CommentID: **239889** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lesly Haynie Hall

2/15/26 7:32 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239890** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joel Deihl

2/15/26 7:32 pm

**I DO NOT support this**

I DO NOT support this

CommentID: **239891** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mallory Revere

2/15/26 7:38 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239892** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeffrey Hall

2/15/26 7:39 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239893** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Daiger

2/15/26 7:41 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239894** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rachel Woolard

2/15/26 7:42 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239895** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katlyn reamy

2/15/26 7:42 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239896** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Ranson-Williams

2/15/26 7:45 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239897** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Lewis

2/15/26 7:45 pm

**Do not support**

DO NOT support

CommentID: **239898** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 7:47 pm

**Menhaden**

I do not support this!!

CommentID: **239899** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 7:48 pm

**Do not support this bill**

This bill is not justified.

CommentID: **239900** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Arlene Crabbe

2/15/26 7:48 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this bill!

CommentID: **239901** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather feldmann

2/15/26 7:51 pm

**I do not support**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239902** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sheila Deihl Wilson

2/15/26 7:52 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239903** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katelyn Basker

2/15/26 7:53 pm

**I do not support!**

I do not support!

CommentID: **239904** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trinia Timberlake

2/15/26 7:54 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239905** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chad Dameron

2/15/26 7:56 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239906** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelly Helmick

2/15/26 7:57 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239907** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jesse Helmick

2/15/26 7:58 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239908** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Peyton Wilmer

2/15/26 7:59 pm

**i do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239909** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tony King

2/15/26 8:00 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239910** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lisa Lane

2/15/26 8:01 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239911** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Frank Lane

2/15/26 8:01 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239912** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Justin King

2/15/26 8:02 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239913** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Collin Saunders

2/15/26 8:02 pm

**I Do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239914** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Erin King

2/15/26 8:02 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239915** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Meghan Shores

2/15/26 8:03 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239916** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wyatt Helmick

2/15/26 8:04 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239917** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Skylar Dixon

2/15/26 8:04 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239918** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Amy Lamb

2/15/26 8:07 pm

**I do not support**

There is no need to establish a complete moratorium on Menhaden fishing at this time. This would devastate the community of Northumberland. The proper scientific research has not been completed to do this.

CommentID: **239919** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marian Leigh Walker

2/15/26 8:08 pm

**Do Not Support**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239920** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 8:08 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **239921** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Susan Swann

2/15/26 8:14 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239922** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Spencer Crittenden

2/15/26 8:19 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239923** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Larry Landers

2/15/26 8:21 pm

**Petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239924** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** R. Richardson

2/15/26 8:24 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support.

CommentID: **239925** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ashley Payne

2/15/26 8:25 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239926** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Larry Landers

2/15/26 8:25 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239927** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Burton Thrift

2/15/26 8:25 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support this legislation

CommentID: **239928** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 8:26 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support.

CommentID: **239929** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Valerie VanWitzenburg

2/15/26 8:26 pm

**Do Not Support**

This legislation is a job killer an has no scientific basis

CommentID: **239930** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Julie Barrack

2/15/26 8:29 pm

**I do NOT support!**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!

CommentID: **239931** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emily Headley Center

2/15/26 8:31 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239932** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sarah Bullis

2/15/26 8:32 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239933** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Edwin W Barrack

2/15/26 8:32 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239934** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jennifer Harding

2/15/26 8:36 pm

**I do not Support**

I do NOT support this!!!!

CommentID: **239935** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alice Harding

2/15/26 8:37 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **239936** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Courtney Barrack

2/15/26 8:39 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239937** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sebastian Harding

2/15/26 8:42 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **239938** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sara Newsome

2/15/26 8:43 pm

**I do not support !**

I do not support this petition .

CommentID: **239939** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hannah Rosas

2/15/26 8:45 pm

**I do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **239940** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Samuel Haynie

2/15/26 8:51 pm

**I do not support!**

I do not support!!

CommentID: **239941** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Edwin Wayne Barrack Jr.

2/15/26 8:52 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239942** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alison Haynie

2/15/26 8:54 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239943** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Josh Bryant

2/15/26 9:09 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239944** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kayla C

2/15/26 9:15 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239945** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather Cockrell

2/15/26 9:26 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support!!

CommentID: **239946** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karas

2/15/26 9:28 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239947** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kylie Robbins

2/15/26 9:30 pm

**I do not support this petition**

This petition is unconstitutional I disagree with its contents and the validity of its benefit to the ecosystem.

CommentID: **239948** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert France

2/15/26 9:46 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239949** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather G Conley

2/15/26 9:51 pm

**I do not support.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239950** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelsey Carlton

2/15/26 9:55 pm

**I do no support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239951** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Caroline Davenport

2/15/26 9:56 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239952** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Leah Ann3

2/15/26 10:04 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239953** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Shaughness

2/15/26 10:23 pm

**I do not support this.**

I do not support this bill.

CommentID: **239954** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Kathryn Hall

2/15/26 10:42 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239955** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Joy Hoyle

2/15/26 10:44 pm

-

I DO NOT Support

CommentID: **239956** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Zach Newman

2/15/26 10:50 pm

**Do Not Support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239957** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karmen Lucas

2/15/26 10:59 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239958** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/15/26 11:02 pm

**Do not support!**

Do not support.

CommentID: **239959** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Abby Shirah

2/15/26 11:09 pm

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition. There is not enough evidence to justify this decision.

CommentID: **239960** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Susan Haynie

2/15/26 11:19 pm

**I do not support!**

I do not support!

CommentID: **239961** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Melissa Roberts

2/15/26 11:26 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239962** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Veverly Williams

2/16/26 12:26 am

### Regulations on Omega Protein

Do not support

CommentID: **239963** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Veverly Williams

2/16/26 12:29 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239964** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** hEATHER cOCKRELL

2/16/26 7:38 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239965** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Heather Huff

2/16/26 7:40 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239966** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Francisca Booker

2/16/26 7:42 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239967** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mary Buchanan

2/16/26 7:43 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239968** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gracey Smith

2/16/26 7:47 am

**Menhaden**

I do not support this

CommentID: **239969** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 7:47 am

**I do not support this Petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239970** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Smith

2/16/26 7:48 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **239971** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** DANIEL BEAL

2/16/26 7:48 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239972** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Isabel Bleiken

2/16/26 7:51 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239973** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** M Flagg

2/16/26 7:53 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239974** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cat Long

2/16/26 7:54 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239975** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bear Jeffries

2/16/26 7:56 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239976** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tanner Cralle

2/16/26 7:58 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239977** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Katelyn Armistead

2/16/26 7:59 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239978** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Conner Huff

2/16/26 8:02 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239979** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hannah Canady

2/16/26 8:03 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239980** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Megan Scerbo

2/16/26 8:05 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239981** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gena Hay

2/16/26 8:06 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239982** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dana Welch

2/16/26 8:08 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239983** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alan Welch

2/16/26 8:09 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239984** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Giles Scott

2/16/26 8:13 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **239985** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Justin ALAN Welch

2/16/26 8:13 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239986** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** acob Thomas Mundy

2/16/26 8:16 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239987** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Elisabeth Spotswood Hudnell

2/16/26 8:20 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239988** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gina G Mcghee

2/16/26 8:22 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239989** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Allison Joyce

2/16/26 8:23 am

**I do not support this petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **239990** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Farrell

2/16/26 8:30 am

**Protect menhaden**

I support the proposal to ban commercial harvesting of menhaden.

CommentID: **239991** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jessie Garland

2/16/26 8:45 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

Do not support

CommentID: **239992** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kaylyn King

2/16/26 8:49 am

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **239993** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emily Sprague

2/16/26 8:49 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239994** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brody Sprague

2/16/26 8:50 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239995** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charles Lewis

2/16/26 8:50 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239996** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lisa H. Lewis

2/16/26 8:51 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239997** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Huff

2/16/26 8:51 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239998** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Georgia Sprague

2/16/26 8:52 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **239999** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Margaret Zehmer

2/16/26 8:53 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240000** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Huff Sr.

2/16/26 8:53 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240001** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shelby Sprague

2/16/26 8:54 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240002** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matthew I. Sprague

2/16/26 8:55 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240003** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sylvia Casillas

2/16/26 8:55 am

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240004** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Christopher Sandoval

2/16/26 8:56 am

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support

CommentID: **240005** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Caely Kloc

2/16/26 8:57 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240006** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jack Novak

2/16/26 8:58 am

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240007** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrew Stewart

2/16/26 8:58 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240008** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jan Stewart

2/16/26 8:59 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240009** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dustin Westman

2/16/26 9:01 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240010** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dr. Steven T. Zalesak

2/16/26 9:04 am

**I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS BILL**

The insane destruction of the fish and birds in the Chesapeake Bay by Omega Protein must stop!

I ask the readers of this petition to notice that almost all of those people responding that they do not support this petition leave zero comments explaining why. I believe that they are just mindlessly doing what someone else told them to do.

CommentID: **240011** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dustin

2/16/26 9:07 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240012** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeb Thrift

2/16/26 9:10 am

**Do Not Support**

I do not support any further legislation based on speculation

CommentID: **240013** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Samantha VanWitzenburg

2/16/26 9:12 am

**I do not support**

This is 150 year old industry and there are already massive fish kills due to less fish being harvested.

CommentID: **240014** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cathy Eagles

2/16/26 9:21 am

**Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay fishing**

I DO NOT agree

CommentID: **240015** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Capt Al Dudley

2/16/26 9:30 am

**I do not support!**

I do not support. Capt Al Dudley

CommentID: **240016** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kathryn Sullivan

2/16/26 9:35 am

**I DO NOT Support**

There is no science to back a moratorium on fishing in the Bay.

CommentID: **240017** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Josh Sullivan

2/16/26 9:35 am

**I DO NOT Support**

there is no science to back a moratorium on fishing in the Bay

CommentID: **240018** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrea Mapes

2/16/26 9:35 am

**I DO NOT Support**

there is no science to back a moratorium on fishing in the Bay

CommentID: **240019** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Scott Mapes

2/16/26 9:36 am

**I DO NOT Support**

there is no science to back a moratorium on fishing in the Bay

CommentID: **240020** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Millie Sullivan

2/16/26 9:36 am

**I DO NOT Support**

there is no science to back a moratorium on fishing in the Bay

CommentID: **240021** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** J Brewer

2/16/26 9:51 am

**Support Petition**

I support Petition

CommentID: **240022** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Erica Eubank

2/16/26 9:52 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240023** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Darawn kenner

2/16/26 9:54 am

**Moratorium on Chesapeake bay fishing**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240024** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Unanimous

2/16/26 9:58 am

**Moratorium on Chesapeake bay fishing**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240025** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Unanimous

2/16/26 9:59 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240026** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Shirah

2/16/26 10:07 am

**Menhaden**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240027** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 10:11 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240028** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Al Dudley

2/16/26 10:17 am

**Additional info about not supporting**

I do not support this petition, because it has the potential of destroying the heritage and livelihood of a great portion of people from the Northern Neck of Virginia. The opposition to the Menhaden industry are dealing from a position of misinformation and ignorance about the 167 year old history of the Menhaden industry on the Chesapeake Bay. If the opposition is honest with themselves, they would have to admit that they do not know enough about the Menhaden industry to destroy the lives of so many people.

CommentID: **240029** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Ronald Hudson

2/16/26 10:18 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240030** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Sharon Anthony

2/16/26 10:26 am

**PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240031** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** DOUGLAS ANTHONY

2/16/26 10:27 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240032** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Teresa Bush

2/16/26 10:46 am

**Menhaden**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!

CommentID: **240033** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kristy Hall

2/16/26 10:47 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!!

CommentID: **240034** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ronnie Crockett

2/16/26 10:48 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240035** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** CATHY CROCKETT

2/16/26 10:48 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240036** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Hannah Long

2/16/26 10:53 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition. There is no evidence to support, as the stock is continuously shown to be stable.

CommentID: **240037** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rick Dudley

2/16/26 11:09 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I Do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240038** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alva Jackson

2/16/26 11:20 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240039** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aaron Taylor

2/16/26 11:40 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I so do not support this petition

CommentID: **240040** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kendall Anderson

2/16/26 11:40 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240041** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark Hurst

2/16/26 11:41 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240042** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keegan Kellum

2/16/26 11:42 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240043** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kent Lewis

2/16/26 11:42 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240044** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donnie Davis

2/16/26 11:43 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240045** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeffrey Hall

2/16/26 11:43 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240046** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wayne Harding

2/16/26 11:44 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240047** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Colby George

2/16/26 11:44 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240048** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Haley Eubank

2/16/26 11:44 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240049** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Arthur Bowers

2/16/26 11:45 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240050** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ada K Shepherd

2/16/26 11:45 am

**I Do Not Support**

I Do Not Support

CommentID: **240051** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Shepherd

2/16/26 11:46 am

**I Do Not Support**

I Do Not Support

CommentID: **240052** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lawrence Kelly

2/16/26 11:47 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240053** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ryan Fisher

2/16/26 11:50 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240054** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jervon Henderson

2/16/26 11:51 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240055** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** James Seagle Jr.

2/16/26 11:51 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240056** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert H. Oder

2/16/26 11:51 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240057** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marty Carter

2/16/26 11:52 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240058** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelsey Haynie

2/16/26 11:57 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240059** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Welby Saunders

2/16/26 12:01 pm

**I do not support**

So many don't understand the impact the fishing industry has on our local economy. It's important we support Omega

CommentID: **240060** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Erin McIlwee

2/16/26 12:03 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I Do Not Support

CommentID: **240061** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Bateman

2/16/26 12:05 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

This petition would see the end to a heritage industry vital the economic wellbeing of the Northern Neck and would see the loss of hundreds of jobs, putting further strain on an already floundering workforce. I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240062** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kimberly Hinton

2/16/26 12:15 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this Petition!

CommentID: **240063** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gilbert sprague

2/16/26 12:16 pm

**Do not support this bill**

Do not support this bill

CommentID: **240064** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brooke Self

2/16/26 12:18 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240065** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tyler Hudgins

2/16/26 12:18 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240066** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wade Self

2/16/26 12:21 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240067** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Angela Self

2/16/26 12:21 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240068** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Parker Smith

2/16/26 12:22 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240069** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lacie Self

2/16/26 12:23 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240070** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** A East

2/16/26 12:34 pm

**Stop Foreign Companies Stripping VA Resources!**

Ban OMEGA From Inshore VA Waters. Push them 3+ Miles OFFSHORE!

CommentID: **240071** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carol Ransone

2/16/26 12:35 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240072** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donald Brown

2/16/26 12:36 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS

CommentID: **240073** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelsey Dawson

2/16/26 12:39 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240074** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Rachael Carter

2/16/26 12:42 pm

**I donot support**

I donot support

CommentID: **240075** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Kellum

2/16/26 12:43 pm

### **I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

This petition would put an end to a heritage industry. This industry plays a vital economic role in our middle and impoverished families. This would mean the end of many jobs in the Northern Neck and putting further strain on families and children. In addition, the facts are skewed and misleading.

CommentID: **240076** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrew B Self Jr

2/16/26 12:56 pm

### **Menhaden Reduction**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240077** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gabrielle Dawson

2/16/26 1:01 pm

### **I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS.

CommentID: **240078** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Carrie Jett

2/16/26 1:02 pm

### **I do not support**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **240080** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Dawson

2/16/26 1:02 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

This has gotten to be ridiculous!! I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240079** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Meredith M. Robbins Sr.

2/16/26 1:10 pm

**Strongly disagree with the petition**

I do not support this petition. I will be 97 years young in May. I started menhaden fishing at the age of 27. I was a Captain for 37 years and fished from Main to Texas for menhaden for 3 different companies. We had some good years and some bad years but we always caught fish. I have had 3 sons that were Captains and the youngest is still at it. The business was very good to me and my family. There are only 6 boats fishing now and there is no way than are hurting this Bay.

CommentID: **240081** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mack Robbins

2/16/26 1:15 pm

**I no not support this petition**

I do not support this petition. I have fished for both bait and reduction and have Gillette's as well. There are a lot of variables involved in menhaden fishing. Weather conditions, rainfall, lack of rainfall, migration patterns just to name a few. Fish come in cycles.

CommentID: **240082** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Lane Abbott

2/16/26 1:23 pm

**I don't agree with the petition**

I am a weekend hook and line fisherman. We see young menhaden in the creeks and in the Bay. They were everywhere this past summer. We caught blue fish, Cobia and Spanish Mackerel almost every trip. My community depends on these fishermen and I don't think they should lose their jobs because someone says that there are not any menhaden in the Bay. It's just not the truth.

CommentID: **240083** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kevin Catlett

2/16/26 1:30 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

The Chesapeake Bay is a living system, and Menhaden are one of the species that hold it together. They filter the water, feed larger fish like striped bass, and support birds and marine life throughout the bay. When they are overfished it weakens the health of the ecosystem. I support stronger protections and responsible harvest limits.

CommentID: **240084** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Blake walker

2/16/26 1:30 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **240085** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Micheal Thomas

2/16/26 1:40 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240086** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Micheal Thomas

2/16/26 1:42 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240087** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Spencer Hall

2/16/26 1:43 pm

**I DON'T SUPPORT THIS**

I DONT SUPPORT THIS

CommentID: **240088** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** McKenna Dooley

2/16/26 1:49 pm

**do not support**

do not support

CommentID: **240089** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:**

2/16/26 2:25 pm

**Bay menhaden**

Yes. Menhaden are filter feeders; will help cleanse the water and promote fisheries for both private and commercial fishermen. There is a huge ocean for the menhaden fleet, plus all menhaden will not stay in the bay but migrate to the ocean .

CommentID: **240090** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeff Welch

2/16/26 2:27 pm

**I fully Support This**

Kick Omega out of the Chesapeake Bay

CommentID: **240091** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Matt Hornbaker

2/16/26 2:45 pm

**Fully Support Protecting This Vital Resource**

As a recreational fisherman, more bait fish is a good thing. I fully support reducing commercial harvest to more sustainable levels. Especially reduce harvesting by foreign owned ships.

CommentID: **240092** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Daniel schuder

2/16/26 3:28 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240093** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Trevor Carter

2/16/26 3:56 pm

**I Don't support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT!!

CommentID: **240094** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Franklin Jones

2/16/26 4:03 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240095** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Vickie Jones

2/16/26 4:05 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240096** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alexander Crittenden

2/16/26 4:08 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240097** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Glen Harding

2/16/26 4:39 pm

**Do not support.**

Do not support.

CommentID: **240098** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jimmy Kellum

2/16/26 4:41 pm

**Menhaden petition**

I do not support the petition for rulemaking. I urge the commission not to vote in favor. The petition is not based on scientific information, rather it's based on conjecture.

CommentID: **240099** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 4:44 pm

**Do Not support this petition**

It appears these social media and environmental groups want all fishing to stop while they have someone study their alleged issue. If this petition is approved they will be the first ones to fight any funding attempt and delay the resumption of purse seine fishing. It is the wrong thing to do!

This would decimate the few remaining purse seine bait operations who supply Virginia Watermen with bait, as well as, many of the eastern coast state fisheries. The purse seine fishery in Virginia does not need these types of obstructionist petitions moving forward.

VMRC should reject this petition!

CommentID: **240100** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Liz Kellum

2/16/26 4:44 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition for rulemaking. I urge the commission not to vote in favor. The petition is not based on scientific information, rather it's based on conjecture.

CommentID: **240101** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Patch

2/16/26 5:11 pm

**I support the petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **240102** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Coleman Scott

2/16/26 5:38 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240103** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Michael Stevens

2/16/26 5:50 pm

**I do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **240104** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kim Stevens

2/16/26 5:51 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240105** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Maya Stevens

2/16/26 5:51 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240106** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Randell Cabbage

2/16/26 5:58 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

I do not support this petition!

CommentID: **240107** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ruth Seagle

2/16/26 5:59 pm

**Moratorium**

Do not support

CommentID: **240108** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jason Odom

2/16/26 5:59 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240109** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Luke Wilson

2/16/26 5:59 pm

**I do Not support this petition**

I do Not support this petition

CommentID: **240110** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Samuels

2/16/26 6:01 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT !**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240111** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Meg G

2/16/26 6:06 pm

**I support this**

Time to stop all this destruction on the Bay.

CommentID: **240112** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ray White

2/16/26 6:06 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240113** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 6:07 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240114** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robert Young

2/16/26 6:11 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240115** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bret Scholtes

2/16/26 6:12 pm

**I do NOT support**

I absolutely do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240116** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Norris Bibbens

2/16/26 6:14 pm

**I Do Not Agree**

I Do Not Agree

CommentID: **240117** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jonathan Amico

2/16/26 6:16 pm

**Petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240118** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Henry Deihl

2/16/26 6:16 pm

**I do NOT support this!**

I do NOT support this

CommentID: **240119** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Harrison Deihl

2/16/26 6:17 pm

**I Do NOT support this**

I DO NOT support this

CommentID: **240120** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dexter Bush

2/16/26 6:29 pm

**Menhaden Petition**

I Do Not Support Petition

CommentID: **240121** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Timothy Ledet

2/16/26 6:30 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240122** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kenny Pinkard

2/16/26 6:37 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition and urge commissioners to reject it.

CommentID: **240123** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Virginia Wardman

2/16/26 6:40 pm

**I do support this bill!**

I do support this bill.

CommentID: **240124** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anna Scholtes

2/16/26 6:55 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240125** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Madelyn Scholtes

2/16/26 6:57 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240126** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William McGee - SCLC RICHMOND

2/16/26 6:57 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS BILL**

This bill will adversely affect the lives of African-American men and women who have for generations made their living fishing and harvesting Menhaden. I trust and believe that they know how to best handle this situation in a manner that will keep their industry alive and flourishing. They don't need outside people telling them they can't fish and make a living. These people know from experience what this industry is all about and how important it is and they'll do everything they can

to make sure this industry survives, they're not going to put themselves out of business. So I trust them, I trust the people who have been doing this for generations and I do not trust the government or the Chesapeake Bay foundation or the sports fisherman or anyone else who's trying to destroy their livelihood? .

CommentID: **240127** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Elizabeth Scholtes

2/16/26 6:58 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240128** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tamara Hall

2/16/26 7:02 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this at all

CommentID: **240129** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Caitlin Hall

2/16/26 7:05 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240130** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Hayes

2/16/26 7:09 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240131** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bowe Rogers

2/16/26 7:11 pm

**I do not support this.**

Omega isn't hurting anything. Let the men work.

CommentID: **240132** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 7:17 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **240133** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Duane Davis

2/16/26 7:20 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **240134** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 7:31 pm

**I do not support!**

I do not support!

CommentID: **240135** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Laura Shackelford

2/16/26 7:33 pm

**I do not support**

I do not believe a moratorium on menhaden is in the best interest of the fisheries. I regularly fish and boat on the Chesapeake bay and have seen large areas of bait fish all season long.

CommentID: **240136** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kristen Marfa

2/16/26 7:40 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240137** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emma Dameron

2/16/26 7:41 pm

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240138** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 7:44 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240139** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charlie Thrift

2/16/26 7:44 pm

**Do not Support**

I do not support this legislation

CommentID: **240140** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Maddie VanWitzenburg

2/16/26 7:45 pm

**I Do Not Support**

I don't support legislation on menhaden in the bay

CommentID: **240141** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ernie Marfa

2/16/26 7:45 pm

**Do not support this petition!**

do not support this petition

CommentID: **240142** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dennis Martin

2/16/26 7:51 pm

<http://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title4/agency20/chapter1270>

I do not support

CommentID: **240143** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kelvin Thomas

2/16/26 8:41 pm

**Do Not support this petition.**

Do Not support this petition.

CommentID: **240144** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Garland S

2/16/26 9:49 pm

**Fully support**

I fully support this!

CommentID: **240145** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Martha

2/16/26 9:51 pm

**Support**

I support this effort

CommentID: **240146** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Laverne Wrenn

2/16/26 11:30 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition. And I urge commissioners to reject it.

CommentID: **240147** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/16/26 11:52 pm

**Menhaden regulation**

I do not support this action!

CommentID: **240148** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Donna Waddell

2/16/26 11:54 pm

**Menhaden regulation**

I donot support this action

CommentID: **240149** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 4:55 am

**Petition Signage**

"I do not support this petition and I urge commissioners to reject it."

CommentID: **240150** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Thomas

2/17/26 4:56 am

**I do not support**

Good paying job in a rural town

CommentID: **240151** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Keith Mason

2/17/26 4:57 am

**I do not support**

Let us fish!

CommentID: **240152** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kirk Brown

2/17/26 4:57 am

**I do not support**

Let us fish!

CommentID: **240153** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Larry Lewis

2/17/26 5:08 am

**Anyone in their right mind wouldn't support this petition!!!**

Menhaden is about the only fishery that Amfc deems healthy.

CommentID: **240154** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 7:06 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT!**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240155** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrea Danner

2/17/26 7:30 am

**I support this amendment**

I support this amendment to look at saving the menhaden fish from overfishing and thus providing a food source once again for the ospreys who live along the Potomac River. Thank you!

CommentID: **240156** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Janet Wainwright

2/17/26 7:52 am

**menhaden fishing**

I do not support this petition!!

CommentID: **240157** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marcus Cockrell

2/17/26 7:55 am

**I do not support this.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240158** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Robin Augst

2/17/26 7:56 am

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240159** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mark Augst

2/17/26 7:57 am

**I do NOT support**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240160** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cynitha Jackson

2/17/26 7:57 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240161** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Randolph

2/17/26 7:58 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do NOT support!

CommentID: **240162** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mindy Kelley

2/17/26 7:59 am

**I do NOT support!**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240163** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Sandra Palmer

2/17/26 7:59 am

**I do not support this petition.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240164** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bryan Deal

2/17/26 8:00 am

**I do NOT support.**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240165** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cathy Newsome

2/17/26 8:01 am

**I do NOT support this petition.**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240166** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Sanders

2/17/26 8:02 am

**Menhaden**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240167** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jessica Johnson

2/17/26 8:03 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240168** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Linwood Waller

2/17/26 8:03 am

**I do not support**

I do NOT support!

CommentID: **240169** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Gibson

2/17/26 8:04 am

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240170** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Alexis Gibson

2/17/26 8:04 am

**I do not support**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240171** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** dixie kelley

2/17/26 8:05 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this petition.

CommentID: **240172** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** tanner kelley

2/17/26 8:05 am

**do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240173** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Levi Gibson

2/17/26 8:06 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240174** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cliff Davis

2/17/26 8:06 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240175** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Newsome

2/17/26 8:07 am

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **240176** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** William Spiter

2/17/26 8:07 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240177** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Franchelle Morris

2/17/26 8:09 am

**I Do Not Support**

I do NOT support.

CommentID: **240178** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** T. Diggs

2/17/26 8:12 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240179** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Latoya Diggs

2/17/26 8:12 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240180** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Terrill Diggs

2/17/26 8:13 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240181** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kevin Edwards

2/17/26 8:14 am

**do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240182** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tito Lewis

2/17/26 8:15 am

**i do NOT support**

i do NOT support

CommentID: **240183** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aiyanna Polk

2/17/26 8:15 am

**do not support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240184** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Billy Harding

2/17/26 8:16 am

**i do not support this petition**

I do NOT Support

CommentID: **240185** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marcus Cockrell

2/17/26 8:16 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240186** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mindy Kelley

2/17/26 8:17 am

**do NOT support**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240187** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jonathan Harris

2/17/26 8:18 am

**i do not support this petition**

i do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240188** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Troy Payne

2/17/26 8:19 am

**do not support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240189** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** ronnie harding

2/17/26 8:21 am

**do not support**

i do NOT support

CommentID: **240190** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tiffany MacDonald

2/17/26 8:22 am

**do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240191** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Karleisha Washington

2/17/26 8:23 am

**Do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240192** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** wayne howard

2/17/26 8:24 am

**I do not support**

I do NOT support this petition

CommentID: **240193** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ernest Polk

2/17/26 8:24 am

**Do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240194** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Emayah Polk

2/17/26 8:25 am

**do NOT support THIS!**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **240195** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Frances Polk

2/17/26 8:25 am

**i do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240196** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jennifer Forrest

2/17/26 8:26 am

**i do not support!!!!!!!**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS

CommentID: **240197** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Cindy Taylor

2/17/26 8:27 am

**do NOT support**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION

CommentID: **240198** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** SAGE TAYLOR

2/17/26 8:27 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240199** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Arnett Taylor

2/17/26 8:27 am

**i do not support this petition**

I do NOT support

CommentID: **240200** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** KIMYA A WILLIAMS

2/17/26 8:37 am

**Don't support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240201** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Aimee Grugan

2/17/26 9:14 am

**I Do Support!!!!**

I Do Support!!!!

CommentID: **240202** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wanda McGee SCLC

2/17/26 9:17 am

**Menhaden fishermen and Ocean Harvesters**

"I do not support this petition and I urge commissioners to reject it."<sup>290</sup>

CommentID: **240203** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jill Sears

2/17/26 9:18 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this bill

CommentID: **240204** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Grayson Oder

2/17/26 9:24 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240205** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paula Stallard

2/17/26 9:29 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240206** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mike Sears

2/17/26 9:34 am

**I do not support this**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240207** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Derrick Peterson

2/17/26 9:37 am

**I Do Not Support This.**

I do not support this.

CommentID: **240208** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Annemarie Bairstow

2/17/26 9:38 am

**I support the petition**

I support the petition

CommentID: **240209** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Wendy Newsome

2/17/26 9:48 am

**Rulemaking to Establish a Temporary Moratorium on Chesapeake Bay Menhaden Reduction Fishing**

I do not support this bill.

CommentID: **240210** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeffery Newsome

2/17/26 9:51 am

**I do not support this bill.**

I do not support this bill.

CommentID: **240211** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** David Ventker

2/17/26 10:03 am

**Petition for Proposed Rulemaking for Moratorium on Menhaden Fishing in the Chesapeake Bay**

I DO NOT SUPPORT this Petition.

CommentID: **240212** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bryan Smith / Ocean Harvestors

2/17/26 10:04 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS!**

I **DO NOT** support this petition!

CommentID: **240213** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Steve Joned

2/17/26 10:08 am

**I do not support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240214** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marissa Henderson

2/17/26 10:09 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition that attempts to shut out menhaden fishing in the Bay.

Best,

Marissa Henderson

CommentID: **240215** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Johnny Thrift

2/17/26 10:13 am

**I Do Not Support**

I do not support

CommentID: **240216** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tillie VanWitzenburg

2/17/26 10:14 am

**Do not support**

I don't support this legislation

CommentID: **240217** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Dillon Loving

2/17/26 10:17 am

**Don't support**

I do not agree with or support this petition

CommentID: **240218** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ron Loving

2/17/26 10:18 am

**I do not support this petition**

I don't support this action

CommentID: **240219** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Austin robbins

2/17/26 10:23 am

**I do not support this petition**

There is no science to prove that a 150year old fishery needs to be kicked out of the Chesapeake Bay. The science we do have is failing infrastructure causing sewage leaks into the James and Potomac river. We have an invasion of Blue cat fish that was introduced unnaturally into our state waters. We are dealing with shifts in climate and water temperatures causing fish migrations to differ from historical trends. This petition is another attack on our small fishing communities in the northern neck that have relied on menhaden since the late 1800s. It has created generational fishermen like myself that can trace back which boats my grandfather and great grandfather worked on.

CommentID: **240220** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Captain John Smith

2/17/26 10:49 am

**Tons of fake "I do not support" entries. The results are worthless.**

I hope whomever is running and reporting these public comments realizes that with the lack of any verifications the results are worthless. It should have no credibility for the VMRC Board.

CommentID: **240221** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kystal Fisher

2/17/26 11:03 am

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support.

CommentID: **240222** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tina Reaner

2/17/26 11:04 am

**do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240223** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 11:09 am

**I do not support**

I do not support this petition. It is absolutely ridiculous!

CommentID: **240224** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Teresa Kellum

2/17/26 11:10 am

**Do not support**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240225** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Charles Dodson

2/17/26 11:11 am

**I do NOT support this petition**

do not support

CommentID: **240226** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** vanessa dodson

2/17/26 11:11 am

**petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT

CommentID: **240227** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Omega Protein and Ocean Harvesters

2/17/26 11:12 am

**WE SUPPORT THIS PETITION**

Yes, put a moratorium on the bay until we have bay specific science.

CommentID: **240228** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Marilyn Hollingsworth

2/17/26 11:12 am

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support

CommentID: **240229** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Barbara Slatcher

2/17/26 11:46 am

**The osprey population is crashing, support this petition**

I have been managing Osprey-watch.org for the Center for Conservation Biology since it launched in 2012. CCB is considered a global expert in ospreys. The Chesapeake Bay has the largest population of nesting ospreys in the world, 10,000-12,000 nesting pairs. The osprey are considered a key indicator species for the health of the environment because they are found everywhere and are sensitive to environmental changes. Osprey need high omega fatty fish to raise their chicks. They are dependent on menhaden in the Chesapeake. In the last decade, CCB has been getting reports of more and more nests failing. For the last 3 years, biologists have conducted increasingly larger scale studies to assess these reports. Through a controlled supplemented diet study, biologists confirmed that osprey chicks were dying from starvation, likely due to a lack of menhaden. By 2025, the study covered 1025 nests in 23 study areas of varying salinity. In medium and high salinity areas, where the diet is almost exclusively Menhaden, 741 nests failed completely. For the first time ever, biologists are documenting large numbers of pairs that return from South America in April and May that can't even find enough food nutrition to attempt to lay eggs. This is the first time ever documented. These results are an absolute disaster for our beloved ospreys and all the other species of birds, fish and other wildlife that depend on menhaden. Please put a stop to this fishing in the Chesapeake before it is too late.

CommentID: **240230** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chesapeake Legal Alliance and Southern Maryland Recreational Fishing Org 2/17/26 11:51 am

### **In support of the O'Connor petition**

#### **COMMENT IN SUPPORT OF PETITION FOR RULEMAKING: TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON CHESAPEAKE BAY MENHADEN REDUCTION FISHING**

Submitted by the Chesapeake Legal Alliance and the Southern Maryland Recreational Fishing Organization, to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) are a keystone forage species in the Chesapeake Bay and along the Atlantic coast. Their ecological function as primary prey for striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, red drum, marine mammals, and seabirds places them at the center of ecosystem stability. Peer-reviewed research demonstrates that forage fish generate greater long-term economic and ecological value when managed conservatively and when predator support is prioritized over industrial reduction extraction (Pikitch et al. 2012, 1146–1147; Konar et al. 2019, 226–229).

The Chesapeake Bay serves as the primary nursery ground for Atlantic menhaden (SEDAR 2020, 12–15). Concentrated purse-seine harvest within this nursery creates elevated risk of localized depletion that is not fully captured in coastwide stock assessments.

- Coastwide harvest levels are too high to sustain predator needs. ERP modeling shows predator biomass declines as menhaden harvest increases beyond ecosystem-based targets (ASMFC, 2025, pp. 1–247).
- The most recent stock update, 2025 Atlantic Menhaden Single-Species Stock Assessment Update borders on a finding of ‘overfishing’. The ASMFC found high fishing mortality, low fecundity, and low juvenile abundance (Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission 2025a).
- Chesapeake Bay experiences localized depletion. Potomac River Fisheries Commission landings data demonstrate dramatic regional reductions compared to long-term averages, suggesting nursery-area impacts not captured in coastwide biomass indices (PRFC, 2024, p. 1).
- Regional predator populations show measurable stress. Osprey demographic collapse and striped bass condition studies provide independent biological indicators of forage limitation (Watts et al., 2024, p. 108).
- Previous stock assessments likely understated fishing pressure. The correction of natural mortality rates significantly alters inferred fishing mortality and suggests harvest pressure has been higher than previously believed (Ault & Luo, 2025, p. 41). The Ault & Luo study conclusively shows that the natural mortality rate (M) used in the SEDAR 69 benchmark (1.17 yr<sup>-1</sup>) was likely substantially overstated, with corrected estimates near 0.52 yr<sup>-1</sup> (Ault and Luo 2025, 25–31). Inflated M artificially increases recruitment and biomass estimates and masks fishing mortality (Mannini et al. 2020, 4–6).

Simultaneously, osprey reproductive collapse in the lower Chesapeake Bay is strongly correlated with menhaden abundance decline (Watts et al. 2024, 6–10). Striped bass growth and condition are highly dependent on menhaden availability (Hartman and Brandt 1995, 826–829; Walter et al. 2003, 63–66).

The scientific record supports precautionary action.

## I. LEGAL AUTHORITY AND PUBLIC TRUST DUTY

Under Virginia Code § 28.2-203, fisheries management measures must: 1) Be based upon the best scientific information available; 2) Prevent overfishing; 3) Maintain abundant, self-sustaining stocks; 4) Promote conservation; and 5) Be equitable to all users, so that no single entity captures a disproportionate share.

The Commonwealth holds marine fisheries in public trust for present and future generations. When scientific uncertainty exists concerning stock status or ecosystem impacts, precaution is required

under well-established fisheries management principles (Virginia Code § 28.2-203; National Marine Fisheries Service 2016, 9–12; FAO 1995, Article 7.5).

Failure to act in the face of structural uncertainty and documented menhaden and predator impacts would conflict with statutory duties.

## II. ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF ATLANTIC MENHADEN

Atlantic menhaden function as energy converters in marine ecosystems, transforming plankton production into lipid-rich forage biomass. Because they school densely and possess high caloric content, they provide efficient energetic return to predators relative to dispersed alternative prey (Hartman and Brandt 1995, 818–822). Essington et al. (2006) describe forage fish as trophic “energy conduits” linking lower and upper food web levels (Essington et al. 2006, 3172–3173). Pauly et al. (1998) characterize forage fish as central to food web structure and resilience (Pauly et al. 1998, 861–862).

Pikitch et al. (2012) conclude that forage fish warrant precautionary harvest rules because of their disproportionately large ecosystem impact (Pikitch et al. 2012, 1147; Chagaris et al. (2020) model menhaden–striped bass trophic coupling, showing measurable predator response to forage variation; Anstead et al. (2021) outline ecosystem-based forage management pathways that prioritize predator stability over single-species yield maximization). The 2020 SEDAR 69 Benchmark Stock Assessment confirms that Chesapeake Bay is the most important nursery area for Atlantic menhaden along the U.S. East Coast (SEDAR 2020, 12–15).

Industrial removal from nursery habitat increases risk beyond coastwide averages.

## III. CURRENT STOCK STATUS

The update shows elevated fishing mortality through 2023 (ASMFC, 2025 Update, pp. 100–102). Sustained high fishing mortality reduces the stock’s reproductive buffer and increases dependence on strong recruitment years.

The 2025 Atlantic Menhaden Single-Species Stock Assessment Update (ASMFC 2025a) reports:

- F above ERP target (ii; Fig. 14, 24).
- Fecundity below ERP target and declining since 2012 (ii; Fig. 13, 23).
- Recruitment variability and declining reproductive output (11–13).

Although the stock is not classified as overfished under ERP thresholds, exceeding F target reduces precautionary buffer. Declining fecundity is particularly concerning in a short-lived forage species whose resilience depends on reproductive surplus.

Fishing mortality for the reduction fleet (north and south) remains significant (ASMFC, 2025 Update, pp. 110–120). Reduction fishing constitutes the majority of total removals and disproportionately targets large schooling biomass.

When ERP targets are applied, fishing mortality exceeds ecosystem-based targets in recent years. This exceedance indicates that harvest levels acceptable under single-species MSY may still be ecologically excessive.

Projected analyses indicate substantial reductions (>50%) are necessary to maintain predator biomass targets (ASMFC, 2025, sensitivity analyses). Such reductions would align fishing mortality with ERP thresholds designed to sustain striped bass recovery.

#### **IV. NATURAL MORTALITY (M) UNCERTAINTY**

Natural mortality (M) is one of the most influential parameters in age-structured stock assessment models (Mannini et al. 2020, 1–2).

Ault & Luo identify five major errors in Liljestrand et al. (2019): Overstated tag releases. Inflated release counts distorted survival estimates; Underreported tag recoveries (13%). Recovery undercounting biases mortality calculations; Overstated magnet recovery efficiency. Incorrect efficiency assumptions inflated M; Underreported fishing effort (–47.8%). Underestimated effort masks true fishing pressure.

These errors inflated  $M = 1.17 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  (Ault & Luo, 2025, p. 29), instead of the corrected estimate:  $M = 0.52 \text{ yr}^{-1}$  (Ault & Luo, 2025, p. 41). Lower M implies:

- True fishing mortality is higher than previously believed. Adjusted calculations shift responsibility for stock removals toward fishing rather than natural causes.

Because overestimation of M leads to underestimation of F (Ault & Luo, 2025, p. 9), previous stock health conclusions were overly optimistic. The natural mortality (M) adopted by SEDAR 69 ( $M = 1.17 \text{ yr}^{-1}$ ; SEDAR 2020, 189) exceeded acceptable M estimates by fourteen standard deviations. This is analogous to seeing a 6-foot man and insisting he is over 9-feet tall.

The result is that harvest pressure was underestimated, and resulted in quotas based on an inflated M, which allowed for excessive catch levels. That is, reduction quotas were set too high.

#### **V. ECOLOGICAL REFERENCE POINT (ERP) BENCHMARK**

The ERP benchmark explicitly states that stock status should be evaluated by comparing single-species outputs to ecosystem-derived ERPs (ASMFC, 2025, p. 3). This statement recognizes that traditional MSY-based targets may allow harvest levels that compromise predator biomass objectives.

Key conclusions:

- Predator biomass declines as menhaden harvest increases. The models show that increasing menhaden fishing mortality reduces striped bass biomass relative to target levels, indicating direct trophic linkage (ASMFC, 2025, pp. 160–170).

- ERPs require maintaining higher menhaden abundance than single-species MSY. Ecosystem reference points are more precautionary than MSY because they incorporate predator forage requirements rather than maximizing yield (ASMFC, 2025, pp. 180–190).

- Ecosystem-based targets are more precautionary than historical harvest levels. Historical quotas often exceeded ERP-derived fishing mortality thresholds, particularly during peak reduction years.

These values are the benchmark's quantified expression of "how much menhaden harvest pressure is compatible with striped bass meeting biomass objectives," i.e., the practical "recommendation" for menhaden abundance/availability to striped bass in the ERP framework. Because the 2019 harvest was inflated, sending the stock toward overfished status, F must be reduced.

## **VI. STRIPED BASS DEPENDENCE ON MENHADEN**

Striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) exhibit strong trophic dependence on Atlantic menhaden.

Striped bass consume large quantities of menhaden (Uphoff, 2003; Chagaris et al., 2020), and Scharf et al. (2004) documented Atlantic menhaden as primary prey of large striped bass (Scharf et al. 2004, 1147–1149). Hartman and Brandt (1995) demonstrated that striped bass growth and bioenergetic efficiency are maximized when menhaden dominate diet composition (Hartman and Brandt 1995, 826–829). Uphoff (2003) linked striped bass condition factor directly to menhaden availability (Uphoff 2003, 190–192).

Regionally, menhaden frequently dominate adult striped bass diet biomass in Chesapeake Bay, and Walter et al. (2003) found that menhaden comprised the dominant biomass fraction of striped bass diet in Chesapeake Bay (Walter et al. 2003, 63–66).

Hartman and Brandt (1995) demonstrated that striped bass growth and bioenergetic efficiency are maximized when menhaden dominate diet composition (Hartman and Brandt 1995, 826–829). Uphoff (2003) linked striped bass condition factor directly to menhaden availability (Uphoff 2003, 190–192). Reduced menhaden abundance forces striped bass to shift to lower energy prey, reducing growth and potentially affecting recruitment.

## **VII. OSPREY DEMOGRAPHIC COLLAPSE**

Watts et al. (2024) documents a direct link between reduced regional menhaden availability with dramatic declines in osprey reproductive rates:

- 35-fold menhaden abundance fluctuation (1).
- Decline in reproductive rate over study period (6–8).
- Brood reduction and nest failure exceeding 50% in higher salinity areas (8–10).
- Transition from source to sink population (11).

These findings align with Cury et al. (2011), who found seabird reproductive collapse when forage fish biomass falls below approximately one-third of historical levels (Cury et al. 2011, 1704–1705). Menhaden historically comprised ~75% of osprey diet by weight (Watts et al., 2024, p. 11). Such dietary specialization increases vulnerability to forage decline and reduced fish delivery frequency directly affected chick survival (Watts et al., 2024, p. 37). This corresponded with results of experimental supplementation, which restored nest productivity (Watts et al., 2024, p. 33).

This experimental evidence establishes causality between forage supply and reproductive success.

## **VIII. LOCALIZED DEPLETION IN CHESAPEAKE BAY**

Localized depletion is defined by ASMFC as a reduction in population size or density below levels sufficient to maintain ecological functions. Concentrated industrial harvest within nursery habitat increases localized depletion risk even if coastwide biomass appears adequate.

### **A. Nursery Importance**

The SEDAR 69 Atlantic Menhaden Benchmark Stock Assessment Report identifies Chesapeake Bay as the most important nursery region along the Atlantic coast (SEDAR 2020, 12–15). Juvenile recruitment indices are heavily influenced by Bay conditions.

Industrial removal within nursery habitat disproportionately affects future year classes.

### **B. Potomac River Evidence**

Recent data from the Potomac River demonstrate a dramatic reduction in menhaden landings compared to long-term averages (PRFC, 2024, p. 1). The 2024 Potomac River Fisheries Commission Commercial Finfish Landings Report documents 2024 menhaden landings of 692,078 pounds compared to a historical maximum of 20,820,945 pounds and historical average of 7,028,354 pounds (PRFC 2024, 1). Although landings do not perfectly measure abundance, long-term contraction in availability within tributaries suggests spatial depletion relative to historical distribution.

Localized nursery depletion disproportionately affects resident predators that rely on Chesapeake Bay forage rather than coastwide biomass.

### **C. Spatial Concentration of Effort**

Reduction fishing is spatially concentrated in Virginia waters and the Chesapeake Bay mainstem. Purse-seine harvest occurs primarily within three nautical miles of shore, particularly within nursery habitat (NOAA Fisheries 2021, 4–6).

Forage fish industrial harvest also alters school structure and predator foraging efficiency (Pikitch et al. 2012, 1146–1147). Concentrated purse-seine harvest may disproportionately remove older age classes or densely aggregated schools, potentially affecting predator encounter rates. That is,

spatially concentrated removal also increases the probability that local predator communities experience forage insufficiency despite previous (and incorrect) coastwide biomass assumptions.

## **IX. BYCATCH AND INDUSTRIAL HARVEST IMPACTS**

Peer-reviewed industrial purse-seine fishery studies document bycatch rates between 2–5 percent (e.g., Smith et al., Fisheries Research; NOAA technical reports). Given Chesapeake Bay annual removals in hundreds of millions of pounds, 2–5% implies tens of millions of pounds of predator species lost annually, representing additional unaccounted mortality.

Removal of predator species compounds forage depletion ecosystem effects.

## **X. ECONOMIC VALUE OF MENHADEN LEFT IN THE WATER**

The economic analysis of Atlantic menhaden must extend beyond dockside value of reduction landings and incorporate ecosystem service valuation, predator-supported industries, and long-term intersectoral impacts.

### **A. Forage Fish Economic Theory**

Pikitch et al. (2012) argue that forage fish generate greater long-term economic value when left in the ecosystem to support predator species rather than removed for industrial reduction (Pikitch et al. 2012, 1146–1147). The authors conclude that forage fish harvest control rules should be substantially more conservative than traditional single-species MSY frameworks because their ecological leverage magnifies downstream economic consequences.

Konar et al. (2019) estimated that ecosystem services provided by forage fish—including predator support, tourism, and non-market ecosystem functions—exceed direct industrial harvest value (Konar et al. 2019, 226–229). The authors emphasize that reduction fisheries often underestimate opportunity costs associated with predator-dependent industries.

Pikitch et al. (2014) further stress that ecosystem-based management of forage fish must incorporate indirect economic benefits through predator support and food web stabilization (Pikitch et al. 2014, 45–49). These findings apply directly to Atlantic menhaden in Chesapeake Bay, where striped bass and associated recreational industries dominate economic output.

## **XI. RECREATIONAL VS. REDUCTION ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS**

Recreational striped bass fisheries supported by menhaden generate vastly greater economic activity than reduction fishing, both nationally and in the Bay region. In 2016, American recreational striped bass fishing supported 104,867 jobs and \$7.7 billion in GDP, compared to 2,664 jobs and \$103 million GDP from commercial landings (Southwick Associates 2019, 1–2).

The economic asymmetry between predator-supported industries and reduction fishing is substantial:

- Recreational striped bass fishing supported 104,867 jobs (Southwick Associates 2019, 2).
- Recreational striped bass fishing generated \$7.7 billion in GDP (Southwick Associates 2019, 2).
- Commercial striped bass landings supported 2,664 jobs and \$103 million GDP (Southwick Associates 2019, 2).

Even if only a portion of striped bass productivity depends directly on menhaden availability, the economic leverage effect is enormous. By contrast, Virginia's industrial reduction operations generate approximately \$100 million annually and employ roughly 400 workers, many seasonal.

When evaluated on employment, GDP, and economic multiplier basis, predator-supported industries exceed reduction sector value by orders of magnitude.

In Virginia, striped bass recreational fishing supports:

- Marinas — through docking fees, maintenance, and storage services.
- Boat manufacturers — via vessel sales and upgrades.
- Charter fleet — providing guided fishing experiences.
- Hospitality — including hotels and restaurants tied to fishing tourism.
- Tackle retailers — supplying gear and bait to anglers.

Reduction industry employment is concentrated and limited. Omega Protein employs fewer than 300 full-time workers regionally, according to corporate filings.

Recreational angling supports tens of thousands of jobs in the Bay region, distributing economic benefits across coastal communities rather than concentrating them within a single industrial sector, within a single county.

## **XII. COMPARATIVE STATE MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

Several Atlantic states prohibit purse-seine reduction fishing within state waters, including New Jersey and New York. Spatial restrictions in those states have coincided with notable increases in visible menhaden aggregations and predator presence, including humpback whale occurrences. Although correlation does not prove causation, spatial harvest controls reduce localized depletion risk and provide ecological buffer.

Virginia remains the only Atlantic coastal state permitting large-scale purse-seine reduction fishing in state waters. To date, the VMRC has not regulated the industry.

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CommentID: **240231** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Monty Deihl

2/17/26 12:02 pm

**I do not support this petition**

This Petition is just more of the same, brought by people who are either uninformed or refuse to believe in the current best available science. Atlantic menhaden is already conservatively managed and the only forage stock in the U.S. managed for its ecosystem role using ecological reference points (ERPs). The fishery is also certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, the world's leading conservation certification organization. The latest stock assessment, produced in October 2025, reinforces that the stock is not undergoing overfishing and is not overfished. Additionally, for the Chesapeake Bay, there is already a precautionary 'Cap' of 51,000 metric tons which is approximately one-third of the historical average harvest in the Bay, this despite the fact that there is no scientific evidence that there is a shortage of menhaden inside the Bay. Humans (fishermen) only catch about one percent (1%) of the estimated coastwide number of Atlantic menhaden, and the current 'Cap' inside the Bay represents approximately one-quarter of one-percent (0.28%) of the total number of estimated Atlantic menhaden. A few other scientific facts that people ignore are:

1. Menhaden are not the only, nor most important, forage in Chesapeake Bay. NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Forage Action Team, which studies forage status in the Bay, reported "Diet analyses determined that polychaetes were the most important prey taxa for a suite of Chesapeake Bay fish predators..." In fact, menhaden did not make the 'Top-10' most important forage in the Bay. Read the Report.
2. Menhaden are a major food source for striped bass, however striped bass health surveys taken by VMRC and PRFC, some going back 1990 covering over 35 years and nearly 300,000 fish samples, have recorded that in every single year going back to 1990 the striped bass population in the Bay has been noted as either 'Normal', or 'Very Healthy', and in no year were they cited as 'Stressed'. It is clear that striped bass are finding plenty of food. One of the challenges for striped bass is low recruitment, which obviously is not tied to inadequate forage but more likely other environmental factors. Additionally, science points to fishing pressure and high release mortality which often kills more fish than both commercial and recreational harvests combined. Scientists have gone on record to say that ALL menhaden fishing could stop in the Atlantic and striped bass numbers would not fully recover until fishing pressure on that species is controlled. When striped bass numbers declined in the 1980s, a moratorium on striped bass fishing was enacted from 1985 to 1995 and in that time that biomass completely recovered because the overfishing of that stock was stopped. During that time period, menhaden fishing coastwide was two times what it is now, and menhaden fishing inside the Chesapeake Bay was three times what it is now, clearly demonstrating that menhaden fishing was not the problem with striped bass numbers.

3. Unlike striped bass recruitment in the Bay, menhaden recruitment in the Bay is increasing, with the past three years, 2023-2025, having the highest recruitment since the early 1990s. The Report released in October 2025 stated that “***Atlantic menhaden and bay anchovies were widespread in the Bay for the third consecutive year.***”
4. Science has documented that there are other predatory fish species in the Bay whose numbers are growing including spiny dogfish, red drum, spotted sea trout, cobia, Spanish mackerel and, of course, blue catfish. These species would not be in the Bay if they were deprived of food.
5. There is also no credible science pointing to lack of menhaden due to purse seine fishing in the Bay as the reason for declines in Osprey populations around the Bay. According to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), osprey nest failures are occurring in many places around the country including California, Washington state, Florida, South Carolina, and numerous other areas where menhaden or menhaden fishing are not present. Osprey numbers were up 1,800 percent in the Bay from 1960s to 2022 and have seen a 5-8 percent decrease the past few years. As a reminder, most of the 1,800 percent increase in numbers occurred while menhaden fishing in the Bay was three times (3X) higher than today, before the precautionary harvest restrictions. USGS noted that there could be many causes for these challenges including predation by competitors like eagles, excessive heat, environmental contaminants, and that more information is needed to determine the cause. Additionally, USGS does not cite menhaden as the primary food source for osprey in any area of the Bay. In the fresher water areas of the Bay they cite catfish as the primary food source. In the Popular Island, mainstem of the Bay, they cite striped bass as the primary food source, with menhaden as second. And in the higher salinity lower Bay area they cite spotted sea trout as the primary food source with menhaden as secondary. These were not new studies, but some go back over 15 years before osprey started experiencing nesting failures. Finally, osprey typically lay eggs between mid-April and mid-May, with many nest failures occurring before the purse seine fishery even starts their seasonal fishing efforts.

Menhaden fishing in the Bay is at the lowest level since the early 1900s due to precautionary restrictions. The overall biomass is extremely healthy and NOT OVERFISHED and NO OVERFISHING is occurring. If people would look at the currently available science, and the long history of all these interrelated species, they would see that six menhaden boats fishing today at highly restricted catch levels are not the cause of every issue facing the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **240232** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Suzy 24

2/17/26 12:15 pm

**Zero fish or small size fish caught in VA ChBay. The facts speak for themselves.**

We have fished in Ch Bay from Virginia Beach to Point Lookout, MD for over 35 years. Each year our catch gets fewer and smaller. 2025 was by far our worst year yet.

No Spanish mackerel caught at all in 2025.

Zero blue fish caught in Virginia Ch Bay waters, only two 19" bluefish caught in MD waters.

One 14" flounder caught, (haven't caught a keepable sized flounder in years!)

We were able to catch a 38" cobia but still below keepable limit.

ZERO striper caught in any waters! Not even seen during hours of trolling.

Only rockfish seen caught was on facebook in upper Potomac and upper MD Ch Bay.

**Facts should speak for themselves:**

MD canceled their spring rockfish season for 2025.

What happened to Mid-Atlantic Rockfish Shoot-out? Why was last one in 2022?

Lynnhaven Marine canceled their striper tournament years ago due to lack of fish.

***Why did our local bait shop have to get frozen menhaden from New Jersey instead of from their own backyard?***

There is more than one large international business in VA providing jobs from fishing in the Bay. Please also take into consideration all the small businesses and local people in Virginia also making a living from the Bay and how it affects their local communities and economies.

Talk to the charter boat captains who have canceled charters or moved to MD waters. Talk to the small local bait and tackle shops, talk to the marinas selling gas and bait. Talk to the local seafood shops and restaurants. How has their business been affected the past couple years?

I am all for people making a living but when it is clear as day there is an overfishing problem in the VA Ch Bay it should be investigated SERIOUSLY!

Don't just say we will look into it and get back to you in a few years. It's been declining for YEARS now!

CommentID: **240233** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brandon murphy

2/17/26 12:22 pm

**Corruption at its core.**

It's absurd that va is the only state allowing the destruction of state waters by this one company. Very evident of the corruption when looking at omegas political donations and even their employees connections to political figures. Sadly no one seems to have a spine enough to stand up to stop the destruction and make them fish 3 miles off the beach(which they do already when they overfish the bay)

CommentID: **240234** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 12:22 pm

**Opposed to this petition**

I oppose this petition and any proposal to suspend purse seine fishing in Virginia. I would support an effort to fund additional studies but NO SUSPENSION OF FISHING!

CommentID: **240235** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Divaris Redmond

2/17/26 12:24 pm

**Disagree**

DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION!!!!!!

CommentID: **240236** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tynika Risher

2/17/26 12:26 pm

**Don't Support**

I DO NO SUPPORT THIS PETITION!!!!

CommentID: **240237** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 12:27 pm

**Petiton**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240238** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Krishawn Wiggins

2/17/26 12:27 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240239** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Audrey Sears

2/17/26 12:36 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support this bill!!!

CommentID: **240240** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Shannon Redmond

2/17/26 12:39 pm

**Don't support**

Don't support

CommentID: **240241** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bill Knapp

2/17/26 1:11 pm

**Purse sien destruction of the Bay- Menhaden**

Do the right thing VRMC for once! Shut them down!!!

CommentID: **240242** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** DeAndra Redmond

2/17/26 1:34 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240243** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Krik Lee

2/17/26 1:51 pm

**I DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do NOT support this petiton!

CommentID: **240244** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Casey Davis

2/17/26 1:58 pm

**Oppose**

i do not support this petition

CommentID: **240245** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Stacey Kellum Jr.

2/17/26 2:00 pm

**Disagree**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240246** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gaynell Bondurant

2/17/26 2:04 pm

**I do NOT support this petition**

I do not support this petition in the least bit.

CommentID: **240247** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Paula Van Alstine

2/17/26 2:19 pm

**I support the petition**

I support the moratorium. Stop the fishing immediately.

CommentID: **240248** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 2:26 pm

**Please give the fishery a breather**

Please give the fishery a much needed break; this will help the fish, recreational and commercial watermen in the long term. We have seen what loose regulation with nearly zero oversight has gotten us.

CommentID: **240249** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 2:52 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition

CommentID: **240250** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 2:59 pm

**Petition**

I do not support

CommentID: **240251** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Wayland

2/17/26 3:00 pm

**Stop overfishing Menhaden**

I am 55 years old, I have fished the east coast my whole life from Maine to the Carolinas and currently the menhaden are very small and scarce when I do see them. The bay is obviously a breeding ground for menhaden and should not be commercially fished along with the whole east coast. There are many species that rely on menhaden for survival. Blue crabbing is down, blue fishing is down, striped bass is down, Tuna are way down. Whales are dying and Osprey do not stick around for their season as long as they used to. These are effects I have noticed firsthand that I believe are related to the reduction of menhaden due to commercial fishing. Please stop or you'll destroy many species that rely on them. Thank you for your consideration.

CommentID: **240252** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 3:02 pm

**I do not support**

Do not support

CommentID: **240253** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** William Dunn

2/17/26 3:23 pm

**I agree with this petition**

Virginia needs to wake up to the steady reduction of menhaden in Virginia waters and eliminate the wholesale slaughter of them by the reduction industry. Why do you think that every other state on the eastern seaboard has already done this.

CommentID: **240254** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)**Commenter:** Reid Williams

2/17/26 3:30 pm

**I do not support**

I do NOT support.

CommentID: **240255** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 3:31 pm

**I do NOT support!**

I do NOT support!!!!

CommentID: **240256** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** ZD

2/17/26 3:36 pm

**Support**

Old science is all we have, but modern observation deems the need to update the science and fishing should be slowed until new science supports.

CommentID: **240257** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jeff Payne

2/17/26 3:43 pm

**Limit the harvest**

Limit the harvest. Do what's right

CommentID: **240258** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Mathieu ouellet

2/17/26 3:59 pm

**Pls stop**

Please stop harvesting our baitfish.

CommentID: **240259** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Taylor Deihl, Ocean Harvesters/Omega Protein

2/17/26 4:18 pm

**Comments in Opposition to the Petition**

Ocean Harvesters and Omega Protein submit these comments in opposition to the fourth Petition filed in fewer than three years asking the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for relief it has consistently denied. Specifically, the Petition seeks to ban Ocean Harvesters' vessels from continuing a more than 150-year tradition of harvesting Atlantic menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. The VMRC should follow prior precedent and use its unreviewable discretion to deny this petition too.

This Petition one is uniquely flawed. Its basic structure is that of a legal brief, alleging that all measures the Commission has taken to manage menhaden (including provisions formerly enshrined in law) are illegal. Even the relief requested – a “moratorium” on harvest of menhaden for reduction purposes in the Chesapeake Bay – is structured like a judicial injunction with a remand to the VMRC to “correct” the alleged legal infirmities. The proper forum for these grievances is not the VMRC, but a court of competent jurisdiction. Unfortunately for Petitioner, the statute of limitations for challenging the regulations governing the regulations at 4 VAC 20-1270-35 has long passed. Even had it not, Petitioner's arguments fail both on the law and facts.

The Petition does not even attempt to make the case that a moratorium is consistent with the Commission's legal responsibilities under the Virginia Code, much less the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact. As to its fisheries management duties, the VMRC is not guided by the “Public Trust Doctrine.” VMRC is created by statute and is guided by law which, among other things, instruct the Commission to “promote the general welfare of the seafood industry.” Va. Code § 28.2-201(1). How a measure that would destroy a historic fishery and fishing community meets this objective is unexplained, as is how such a measure is consistent with the standards for fisheries management set forth in Virginia Code § 28.2-203. As explained below, it is not.

Atlantic menhaden is the most conservatively managed forage stock in the United States, the only one managed for its ecosystem role under a state-of-the-art ecological model. The fishery is certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. The stock is not undergoing overfishing (*i.e.*, not harvested at an excessive rate) and is not overfished (*i.e.*, menhaden fecundity is above threshold levels of concern). As to the portion of harvest that occurs in Chesapeake Bay, a precautionary cap constrains harvest to their lowest levels over which data is available. The overall quota for the resource has kept harvest levels at the lowest sustained levels since the Depression era, similar to the period from 1880 to 1898.

This is not a case in which VMRC and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission have ignored their management responsibilities. Both within the Bay and throughout the range of the stock, measures have been taken to keep harvest levels well below historic levels (19% of peak landings and a third of harvest during the 1980s and 1990s), periods when everyone recognizes the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem was healthier.

Finally, the ASMFC is currently reviewing the Chesapeake Bay cap and has been appropriated \$2.5 million to study the Bay fishery. A team of leading menhaden researchers are developing a research

“roadmap” under the auspices of the Science Center for Marine Fisheries. It would not be appropriate for the VMRC to get ahead of these processes. Given that the relief Petitioner requests would devastate Virginia’s historic menhaden reduction fishery and cause grave economic harm to the Northumberland community at a time when jobs are scarce and Virginia citizens are struggling with inflation, the precautionary approach is to maintain the status quo.

### **The Companies’ Detailed Arguments in Opposition**

The Petition relies on two flawed premises. The first is that the Public Trust Doctrine “requires” the Virginia Marine Resource Commission to undertake specific actions, beyond those set forth in the Commission’s governing statutes. It does not. When the General Assembly wants the VMRC to employ this doctrine it specifies so in statute and has not done so with respect to the Commission’s fisheries management responsibilities.

Secondly, Petitioner claims the Commission has failed to meet its obligations under the statute. As the Circuit Court for the City of Richmond recently held, VMRC’s management of the menhaden resource is compliant with the law, acting within its legal authority according to information in the record. As long as the VMRC continues to base its decisions on the best scientific information available – which includes that developed by the ASMFC – and, when it *chooses* to enact a regulation governing the menhaden fishery, is satisfied that the standards set forth in Section 28.2-203 are met, such decisions are lawful.

The “choosing” to regulate is important. The Petition alleges the current menhaden regulatory program is unlawful. Petitions for a new or amended regulation under the Virginia Administrative Process Act (“VAPA”), Va. Code, § 2.2-4007, are not the means for challenging a regulation. If the Petitioner believes the VMRC’s regulatory program is contrary to law, the remedy is to challenge implementing regulations within the time limits set forth in law. Petitioner seeks to evade this burden and the statute of limitations (the 30-day window for challenging 4 VAC 20-1270-35 having expired years ago) and put Commissioners in an untenable position. VMRC members are not judges.

The burden of a person petitioning for a rule is to show that the regulatory action request is consistent with law and, in the case of a fishery regulation, is supported by the “best scientific, economic, biological and sociological information available.” Va. Code 28.2-203(2). This Petition does not even attempt to meet this burden.

The Commission should reject the Petition and its suppositions about impacts of the fishery which defies over a century-and-a-half of experience. It should instead rely on the experts who advise both it and the ASMFC, as well as the legal advice provided by the Virginia Attorney General’s office.

#### **I. The Public Trust Doctrine Does Not Apply**

Petitioner wrongly argues the “public trust doctrine” limits how the Commonwealth manages migratory menhaden while in Virginia waters. As the Virginia Supreme Court noted, “The common rights in a public fishery are at all times subject to the disposal of the legislature, and it may deprive the public of the right at its pleasure. This may be done by granting exclusive rights to individuals, or by dealing with the water in such a way that the fishery is destroyed.” *Commonwealth v. Newport News*, 158 Va. 521, 552-53 (1932) (citation omitted).

No commissioner nor anyone in the menhaden sector seek to “destroy” the fishery. Rather, Atlantic menhaden is the most conservatively managed forage fishery. It is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council based on the fact it is the only forage stock explicitly managed for its role in the ecosystem; is governed by precautionary catch limits (including the Bay cap); and has been proven to have low bycatch.

The public trust doctrine is not a source of law that trumps Virginia’s laws or constitution. When the General Assembly wants the doctrine to be applied, it says so specifically. As the Virginia Court of Appeals, Norfolk Division, recently noted:

The General Assembly did not include any “public trust” or “public interest” language in Code § 28.2-600, even though it has expressly directed VMRC to consider the public interest in other related statutes, such as when the agency issues general oyster leases, see Code § 28.2-607 (requiring VMRC to consider whether “the assignment is in the public interest”), and issues permits for other bottomland uses, see Code § 28.2-1205(A) (requiring VMRC to “consider the public and private benefits of the proposed project” and that it “exercise its authority under this section consistent with the public trust doctrine”). It declined to include comparable language in Code § 28.2-600. “[W]hen the General Assembly has used specific language in one instance, but omits that language or uses different language when addressing a similar subject elsewhere in the Code, we must presume that the difference in the choice of language was intentional.”

*City of Virginia Beach v. VMRC*, Rec. No. 1648-17-1 (Aug. 21, 2018) (citation omitted). The same holds true for Chapter 2 of Title 28.2, which, among other things, sets forth the Commission’s authority to manage fisheries and sets forth the standards governing that process. Nowhere in these laws is the Commission directed to apply the doctrine.

Petition claims to find a “public trust” duty in § 28.2-201, but the very first subsection states that one of its duties is to “[a]dopt regulations ... necessary to promote the general welfare of the seafood industry.” *Id.* § (1). Conservation is an important objective, but equally important mandates are to promote the commercial fishing industry and reap economic benefits from the Commonwealth’s marine resources. *See, e.g.*, § 28.2-202(2) (VMRC should “[p]rovide for the development of programs designed to enhance and improve commercial and sport fisheries in Virginia’s tidal waters.”); § 28.2-203(1) (achieve “optimum yield” or “the amount of fish or shellfish which will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Commonwealth”) *id.*

§ (7) (regulations “shall, where practicable, minimize regulatory burdens which inhibit innovation, expansion, and normal business operations”).

The Public Trust Doctrine has no application to this matter.

## II. Petitioner’s Requested Relief is Unlawful

Petitioner’s most misguided arguments relate to alleged violations of the standards for management in Virginia Code § 28.2-203. Not only is the Petition wrong on the law and facts, the relief requested – a moratorium on reduction harvest in the Chesapeake Bay – is inconsistent with the standards the law requires the Commission to apply.

Fishing in the Bay is a vital element of Ocean Harvesters’ fishing and business plans. There are not enough days with sufficiently calm weather in the ocean for its vessels to safely harvest menhaden in sufficient quantities to remain viable. The Chesapeake Bay became the menhaden reduction industry’s center 150 years ago not only because of the amount of fish annually migrating in, but also due to the relative shelter the Bay provides. Additionally, this is a “sight fishery” where spotter planes and vessels must be able to see menhaden schools. Windy, stormy, and overcast conditions that make operations impossible are much more frequent in the ocean.

Given that Atlantic menhaden are not overfished or subject to overfishing, *in an ecosystem context* no less, the first standard requires the VMRC to obtain “optimum yield,” or “the amount of fish . . . which will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Commonwealth.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(1). Depriving the Commonwealth millions of dollars in revenues and hundreds of jobs from a sustainable fishery falls short of this standard.

Petitioner prefers the Commission define optimum yield solely in terms of that part of the population inhabiting the Bay at any given time. Even if, as a matter of science, it were possible to determine biological reference points for a subset of a population (a matter actually being investigated by the ASMFC), there is no scientific basis for doing so now.

The second standard requires VMRC to base decisions “upon the best scientific, economic, biological and sociological information available.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(2). The best science, based on years of research, is that Atlantic menhaden are a single migratory stock that is neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing.

The Chesapeake Bay cap is not based on scientific evidence but is rather a “compromise” instituted as a precautionary measure to avoid the harms with which Petitioner is concerned. While not based on scientific evidence, it has reasonably been determined to provide such protection by maintaining levels of harvest at the lowest end of the range of harvests that *have been continuously occurring in the Bay for 150*

years. Under this standard, the Commission may rely on the fact that, over this stretch of time, the Bay ecosystem has supported both menhaden harvests magnitudes larger *and* higher populations of predator species.

Lastly, the law requires VMRC to also consider “economic” and “sociological” information. Thus, a decision not to eliminate a historic, as well as culturally and economically important, fishery is entirely consistent with this standard.

Petitioner asserts that the Commission must conduct studies and concoct information to manage the fishery. This is not the law. Federal courts have interpreted the equivalent federal standard as requiring only “that rules issued by the [agency] be based on a thorough review of all the relevant information available at the time the decision was made, and insures that the [agency] does not ‘disregard superior data’ in reaching its conclusion.” *The Ocean Conservancy v. Gutierrez*, 394 F. Supp. 2d 147, 157 (D.D.C. 2005). “Absent some indication that superior or contrary data was available and that the agency ignored such information, a challenge to the agency’s collection of and reliance on scientific information will fail.” *N. Carolina Fisheries Ass’n v. Gutierrez*, 518 F. Supp. 2d 62, 80 (D.D.C. 2007). VMRC complies with these standards.

The third standard requires that “[t]o the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout the territorial waters of the Commonwealth, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(3). This is how menhaden are managed. The Commonwealth’s allocation is distributed among user groups and, for the largest sector, the reduction fishery, it distributes catch between the Bay and the ocean. The “unit” of menhaden in the Bay is not a different “unit” from those in Virginia’s ocean waters. They are all part of one stock which is managed as forage (*i.e.*, in “close coordination” with “interrelated stocks of fish”). The law requires nothing more. Treating menhaden in the Bay differently may run afoul of this standard.

The fourth standard requires allocations to be “fair and equitable to all fishermen..., promote conservation..., and [be] carried out in such manner that no person acquires an excessive share of such privileges.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(4). Petitioner claims the reduction sector’s allocation (just over 90% of Virginia’s share) is “unfair” and “excessive.” It is not unfair that the General Assembly allocated each sector the proportion of harvest it historically landed any more than it was for the ASMFC to allocate Virginia the proportion of quota it historically harvested.

The allocation standard does not require equal shares. It must be read in conjunction with the other standards, like use of the “best information” and achieving optimum yield. Like Virginia, federal and interstate fisheries managers look at historic and current use of, and dependence on, a resource when allocating resources. It’s an objective way of making such decisions rooted in data and to ensure fairness. The opposite would be to arbitrarily distribute resources, such as to favored groups. This the law does not allow.

Distributing allocations based on use is the best means of attaining optimum yield. Here, allocating the bait sector much larger shares would prevent the VMRC from maximizing the fishery's "overall benefit to the Commonwealth" because the allocation would go underutilized. Jobs and economic activity in the reduction sector would be lost with no counterbalancing gains in the bait sector. Granting Petitioner the relief requested – preventing Ocean Harvesters from operating in the Chesapeake Bay – would effectuate an enormous reallocation that is inconsistent with this standard.

The fifth and seventh standards are interrelated and each weighs heavily against granting Petitioner relief. The first provides: "Conservation and management shall, where practicable, promote efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources, except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose." Va Code § 28.2-203(5). Purse seining is an extremely efficient means of harvesting menhaden, in terms of volume and in avoiding incidental catch. The Bay fishery is even more efficient because it takes far less fuel, food, and time to harvest a given amount of menhaden there compared to the ocean. Prohibiting the Chesapeake Bay fishery would do the opposite of what this standard requires – mandating inefficiency by regulation.

The seventh standard instructs VMRC to "minimize regulatory burdens which inhibit innovation, expansion, and normal business operations." Va. Code § 28.2-203(7). There is little need to belabor this point. Ending the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery would be an enormous regulatory burden that would not "inhibit" Omega Protein's and Ocean Harvesters' normal operations, it would end them.

The final standard provides that "[c]onservation and management measures shall take into account variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches." Va. Code § 28.2-203(6). Petitioner's claim is that a "static cap" does not consider the dynamic Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. First, the cap is not "static." It has been reduced three times from over 100,000 mt to 51,000 mt, and the ASMFC is considering measures that may reduce it further. Second, the fact that there is a cap is a recognition of the "variations" and "contingencies" in the fishery and the fishery resources. This standard requires no more than recognizing that fisheries are dynamic and that new information should be incorporated into management decisions. This is exactly how the VMRC manages this resource in conjunction with the ASMFC. The law requires nothing more.

In summary, a decision to terminate the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery, and with it an industry which is an integral part of Virginia's history would be arbitrary, capricious, and inconsistent with the standards by which the Commission is charged with carrying out its duties. It would violate the requirement to obtain optimum yield and be based on no scientific information whatsoever. In fact, by imposing a ban, the VMRC would have to ignore economic facts and socioeconomic impacts. It would manage menhaden while in the Bay differently than when in Virginia's coastal waters, constitute an excessive and unfair allocation to the bait sector, mandate inefficiency, maximize regulatory burdens, disrupt business operations, and quash innovation and expansion. In short, the relief sought is simply inconsistent with the law.

For all these reasons, the Companies respectfully request the Commission to deny the Petition. More detailed comments have been submitted directly to VMRC.

---

CommentID: **240260** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 4:40 pm

### **Stop catering to corporations**

The science is perfectly clear. Reduction fishing is putting the entire bay ecosystem in jeopardy. The ONLY reason to allow it to continue is to support business over the interests of the citizens and taxpayers. Stop rubber-stamping the rape of our resources for private gains.

CommentID: **240261** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Ed Minor

2/17/26 5:04 pm

### **Oppose**

Strongly oppose this . No science to prove what you all are trying to do

CommentID: **240262** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richmond VA Branch NAACP

2/17/26 5:05 pm

### **Opposing this**

We stand in opposition to this

CommentID: **240263** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 5:07 pm

### **Stop the slaughter**

I have seen the destruction of the slaughter of Menhaden for 55yrs

321

CommentID: **240264** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** John Talley

2/17/26 5:07 pm

### **Stop the slaughter**

I have seen the destruction of the slaughter of Menhaden for 55yrs

CommentID: **240265** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Fleeton Point Fisheries

2/17/26 5:11 pm

### **I do not support this petition**

Menhaden Fishing has been going on for 150 years in the Chesapeake Bay. The Menhaden stocks are extremely strong. The Chesapeake Bay is in a terrible state of health because of Sewage, Farm Runoff, and just too many homes being built too close to the waters edge. The Fisherman are not the problem. In January I personally recorded more Menhaden Bodies in the Chesapeake Bay on my Sonar and Depth Recorder than I have ever seen in my 40 years of being a Commercial Menhaden Captain. Thats a FACT, not a made up story. You will hear stories of the starving Ospreys and Rockfish. Not true. They are in abundance also. I spend most of my life actually on the Chesapeake Bay. Not googling the false info that the Chesapeake Bay Foundation constantly puts out there for anyone gullible enough to believe.

Thank you,

Capt Bert Lewis

CommentID: **240266** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Bobby Crutsinger

2/17/26 5:13 pm

### **Save our Menhaden**

Stop the harvesting our Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay & Ocean.

Omega has overfished menhaden for years. I have fished these areas for 40 years & have seen the demise of our natural resources.

Stop now before it's too late!!!

CommentID: **240267** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 5:40 pm

**Save the bay**

Save the bay

CommentID: **240268** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Craig Freeman

2/17/26 5:40 pm

**Support**

Please let there be a moratorium until more scientific data can share the health of the stock.

the #MIN Hayden are in trouble and have been for years and the reduction fishery is harming the health of the Bay.

CommentID: **240269** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** E. Russell Haynie

2/17/26 5:42 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240270** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Back River Rods

2/17/26 5:42 pm

**Support the moratorium**

Please ban menhaden Fishing in the Chesapeake Bay. I make fishing rods, and my sales have declined dramatically over the last several years due to the lack of rockfish and Cobia in the bay.

It's a direct line to the lack of forage fish. The reduction fishery is just that, it reduces the population too points that are unsustainable. Please put a moratorium on the menhaden until a study can be done to say the health of the stock is good.

CommentID: **240271** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Grading Scales Fishing

2/17/26 5:47 pm

**Ban bunker fishing in state of Va**

A moratorium is necessary to ensure the health of the bay. Several species are dependent upon the menhaden, and are failing to thrive. Rockfish, cobia, and osprey to name just a few. Surely it is not too much to ask for a moratorium while a scientific study occurs to determine whether or not these fish are in trouble.

Remember, Virginia is the only state that allows a reduction fishery to the extent that Omega and Ocean harvesters have. A ban in state waters will not hurt the reduction fishery as they fish outside the state more times than not.

Please make this moratorium happen while a study is done.

Sincerely,

Capt. Craig Freeman

CommentID: **240272** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Brian Harris

2/17/26 5:56 pm

**Do not support.**

Do not support.

CommentID: **240273** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 5:57 pm

**Do not support**

Do not support.

CommentID: **240274** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kim Reid

2/17/26 6:02 pm

**4 VAC 20-1270**

I do not support this

CommentID: **240275** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kimberly C Reid

2/17/26 6:03 pm

**I do not support this**

I do not support this!

CommentID: **240276** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** TACKLE BOX NJ

2/17/26 6:06 pm

**Need to reduce!!**

This needs to stop once and for all! They are overfishing menhaden EVERYWHERE!

CommentID: **240277** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tim

2/17/26 6:18 pm

**Reduction moratorium**

At least show support for American fisheries ,crab striped bass and pelagics that depend on a healthy source of food. Omega rapes this coast every time the opportunity presents the means for them to overharvest!!

CommentID: **240278** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Roman Boell

2/17/26 6:22 pm

**Need to recuce**

Menhaden is the most important fish in the sea and we need to reduce harvest more than it has been.

CommentID: **240279** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Saggese

2/17/26 6:31 pm

**Stop commercial bay fishing for menhaden**

Stop the fishing in the bay for menhaden

CommentID: **240280** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Wright

2/17/26 6:40 pm

**Support -- stop omega before its too late.**

Stop Omega before it's too late. I have a 2 yr old that deserves to enjoy the bay when he grows up.

CommentID: **240281** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Libbie Mitchell

2/17/26 6:48 pm

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

I do not support!!

CommentID: **240282** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 7:08 pm

**Oppose the petition**

This petition is unnecessary, I oppose it, and ask that VMRC reject it. Science HAS been applied to establish the quotas over decades. To target one method of fishing while environmental groups want to study what they think is a problem is simple WRONG!

CommentID: **240283** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 7:15 pm

**I support this**

I support this proposition to limit fishing

CommentID: **240284** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Diane Massa

2/17/26 7:44 pm

**I support this petition.**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **240285** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Morelle

2/17/26 7:45 pm

**Menhaden**

I support this bill.

CommentID: **240286** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Richard Owens

2/17/26 7:51 pm

**I DO SUPPORT THIS PETITION TO FURTHER LIMIT MENHADEN FISHING IN THE BAY**

I do support this petition to establish a temporary moratorium on the fishing of menhaden by the purse seine technique for a period of time until studies can be performed that establish the safe number of Manhattan that can be removed from the Chesapeake Bay. Currently the level of menhaden fish being removed from the Chesapeake Bay exceeds the amount to support the ecology of the bay and a healthy fishery for larger fish.

Commercial and sport fishing for larger fish supports the economy and families up and down the entire length of the bay.

CommentID: **240287** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Jami seagle

2/17/26 7:52 pm

**I do not support this bill**

I do not support

CommentID: **240288** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Chris Braly

2/17/26 8:01 pm

**I do not support this petition**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240289** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anthony Martin

2/17/26 8:11 pm

**Petition to stop Menhaden fishing in the bay**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **240290** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andy Huthoefer

2/17/26 8:13 pm

**I support this petition!**

I am fully supportive of this petition. Very concerned about our ospreys not finding enough food.

CommentID: **240291** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Thomas Powell

2/17/26 8:30 pm

**I SUPPORT THIS. KICK ALL**

We're not trying to shut it down — we're trying to shift it offshore.

328

It's not anti-business to say the most valuable fish in the Bay shouldn't be pumped out. Omega Protein can thrive without treating the Chesapeake Bay as a sacrifice zone. We need this bill until we can push Cooke / Omega fisheries out of the Chesapeake Bay. We are the only state on the East coast that lets them in state waters. They use spotter planes and huge nets that don't give the fish a fighting chance. I've lived on the Bay majority of my life. Used to catch rockfish off my dock every night and now can't catch one. They used to fill the bay. This over fishing has taken a beating on the rockfish, Cobia, osprey etc that need this fish to survive. I don't think it's asking too to halt their operation until scientific data can be reached and eventually get them out the bay. If the workers are paid on how many pounds of menhaden they bring in sounds like that is a companies problem and maybe they need to be paid hourly or a salary. I would like my son and his friends to be able to enjoy the bay like I did but we are going in the opposite direction and tiring a blind eye. Thank you for your time and hope you all do the right thing.

CommentID: **240292** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 8:38 pm

### **Reject/Oppose the petition**

This petition represents the most anti-business and targeted attempt by environmental groups and misguided fishing associations to study a problem they imagine exists. MRC should reject this petition as they have done from these groups numerous times before.

I do not support this petition or any petition that would cause harm to our Virginia Watermen and fishery businesses.

CommentID: **240293** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Andrea Danner

2/17/26 8:47 pm

### **I support this amendment**

I support this amendment to help save the menhaden population.

CommentID: **240294** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tomeka Kelley

2/17/26 8:58 pm

### **I DO NOT SUPPORT this Petition**

I DO NOT SUPPORT THIS PETITION.

CommentID: **240295** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Curtis Reed

2/17/26 9:07 pm

**I support this petition.**

I am in support of this petition to put a moratorium on Menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **240296** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Kevin Smith

2/17/26 9:09 pm

**Rules Petition**

I support this petition 100%

CommentID: **240297** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 9:53 pm

**I do not support this petition!**

I do not support this petition.

CommentID: **240298** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 9:55 pm

**Do NOT support, this would take away jobs from AMERICANS**

Do not support this.

CommentID: **240299** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Darby

2/17/26 9:58 pm

**I support this petition**

I support this petition.

CommentID: **240300** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 10:16 pm

**Reject this petition**

Completely opposed to this petition. It's another attempt by these social media groups and groups from out of state to interfered with Virginia's commercial fisheries. It would cost Virginia jobs, disrupt a traditional Virginia fishery, and risk fisheries along the Atlantic coast that rely on our bait fishery. It's a terrible idea that must be put down.

CommentID: **240301** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Gary Kelley

2/17/26 11:13 pm

**Petition**

I do not support this petition

CommentID: **240302** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 11:19 pm

**Do Not Support This Petition**

This petition is ridiculous! As are the claims of these groups bringing it forward with regard to the plight of menhaden. Do not accept this petition for rule making.

CommentID: **240303** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Luther Anderson, SCLC

2/17/26 11:30 pm

**I do not support the petition**

I do not support the petition

CommentID: **240304** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Tom Burkett, Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Association

2/17/26 11:49 pm

### **I Support This Petition, Enact a Moratorium**

I support the petition. Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and members of the Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission can not provide scientific assurance that the spatial or seasonal stock of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay is healthy. VMRC should take conservative measures now to protect our fishery and enact a moratorium on menhaden reduction fishing in the Chesapeake Bay until science is conducted and can be reviewed.

Plummeting ERPs and key predator indicators such as Striped Bass and Osprey are indicating that Atlantic menhaden have dropped below critical thresholds in the Chesapeake Bay. By design, industrial extraction methods at the scale and frequency occurring in the Chesapeake Bay are causing a local depletion of menhaden. With the use of spotter airplanes, the industry quickly covers the entire Virginia area of the Chesapeake Bay in a matter of hours, locates the menhaden schools, dispatches multiple vessels to the schools, and extracts the schools of menhaden with purse seines. The repetition of the industry's daily aerial surveillance based large scale extraction campaigns in a confined area like the Chesapeake Bay causes localized depletion. VMRC should pause all industrial purse seining of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay until VMRC can provide evidence that regional overfishing and localized depletion of menhaden is not occurring, and Atlantic menhaden are at a stable threshold to support key predators in the Chesapeake Bay.

CommentID: **240305** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) [Move Comment](#)

**Commenter:** Anonymous

2/17/26 11:51 pm

### **No support for this petition**

It would foolish for VMRC to accept this petition. It's full of baseless assumptions of menhaden stock health and claims of overfishing. It should be rejected the same as all the other petitions to shut down or limit the Virginia menhaden fishery. The Federal government has determined menhaden stocks are fine, the federal fisheries agencies have determined the Atlantic stock is not over fished and overfishing is not occurring, even the Maryland DNR has stated they seen the highest growth of menhaden since 1990 in recent surveys. This petition is baseless and should not be accepted.

CommentID: **240306** [Flag as Inappropriate](#) **Move Comment**



February 6, 2026

**Via Electronic Mail**

Mr. Joesph Grist  
Acting Commissioner, Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
380 Fenwick Road - Building 96  
Ft. Monroe, VA 23651

**RE: Opposition to Ms. Tanya O'Connor's Petition for Rulemaking**

Dear Acting Commissioner Grist:

Ocean Harvesters and Omega Protein submit this letter in opposition to the fourth Petition filed in fewer than three years that seeks action by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (“VMRC” or “Commission”) that it has consistently denied. Specifically, the Petition seeks to ban Ocean Harvesters’ vessels from continuing a more than 150-year tradition of harvesting Atlantic menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay. The VMRC should follow its prior precedent and use its unreviewable discretion to deny this petition as well.

Among all the petitions, this one is uniquely flawed. Its basic structure is that of a legal brief, setting forth allegations that all measures the Commission has taken to manage menhaden (including provisions formerly enshrined in law) are illegal. Even the relief requested – a “moratorium” on harvest of menhaden for reduction purposes in the Chesapeake Bay – is structured like a judicial injunction with a remand to the VMRC to “correct” the alleged legal infirmities. The proper forum for these grievances is not the VMRC, but a court of competent jurisdiction. Unfortunately for Petitioner, the statute of limitations for challenging the regulations governing the regulations at 4 VAC 20-1270-35 has long passed. Even had it not, Petitioner’s arguments fail both on the law and facts, as explained in depth below.

Meanwhile, the Petition does not even attempt to make the case that a moratorium is consistent with the Commission’s legal responsibilities under the Virginia Code, much less the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact and Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. With respect to its fisheries management duties, the VMRC is not guided by the “Public Trust Doctrine.”<sup>1</sup> Rather, the VMRC is created by statute and guided by law which, among other things, instruct the Commission to “promote the general welfare of the seafood industry.” *Id.* § 28.2-201(1). How a measure that would destroy a historic fishery and fishing community meets this

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<sup>1</sup> As shown below, when the General Assembly wants the Commission to apply this doctrine, it specifically directs VMRC to do so, such as in the section governing the issuance of certain bottomland permits. *See* Va. Code § 28.2-1205(A)).

objective is unexplained, as is how such a measure is consistent with the standards for fisheries management set forth in Virginia Code § 28.2-203. As we explain below, it is not consistent with these standards or the law generally.

Atlantic menhaden is the most conservatively managed forage stock in the United States, the only one managed for its ecosystem role under a state-of-the-art ecological model. The fishery is certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, the world’s leading conservation certification organization. The stock is not undergoing overfishing (*i.e.*, not harvested at an excessive rate) and is not overfished (*i.e.*, menhaden fecundity is above threshold levels of concern). As to the portion of harvest that occurs in Chesapeake Bay, a precautionary cap constrains harvest to their lowest levels over which data is available. (Figure 1.) The overall quota for the resource (established in 2012) has kept harvest levels at the lowest sustained levels since the Depression era, similar to the period from 1880 to 1898. (Figs. 2 and 3.)

Figure 1

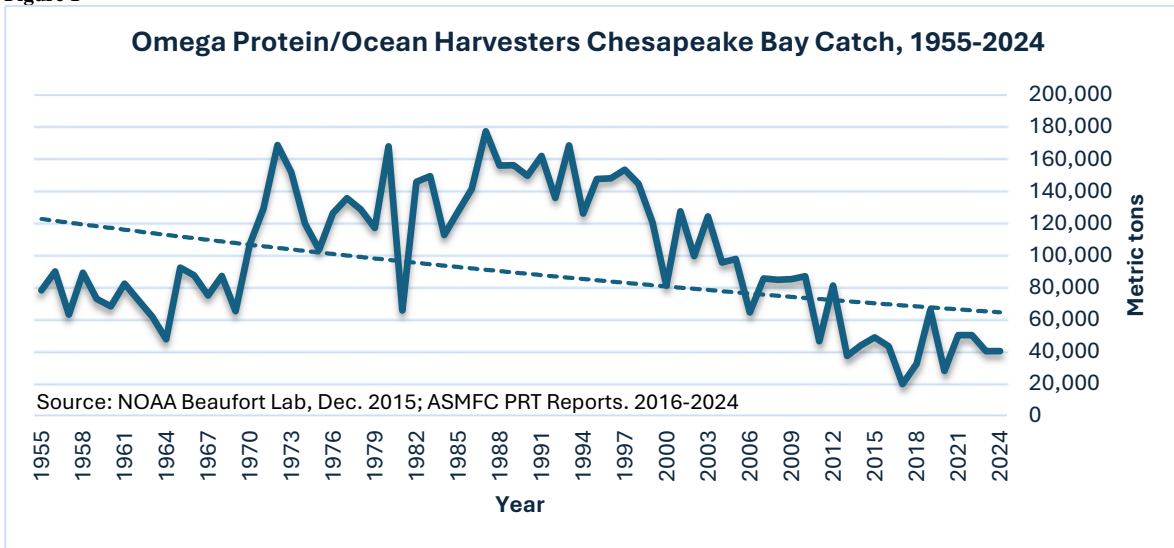


Figure 2

Figure 4.2. A comparison of commercial catch statistics taken from *Historical Reports* (linearly interpolated by region) with reduction landings statistics maintained at NOAA Fisheries at Beaufort, NC.

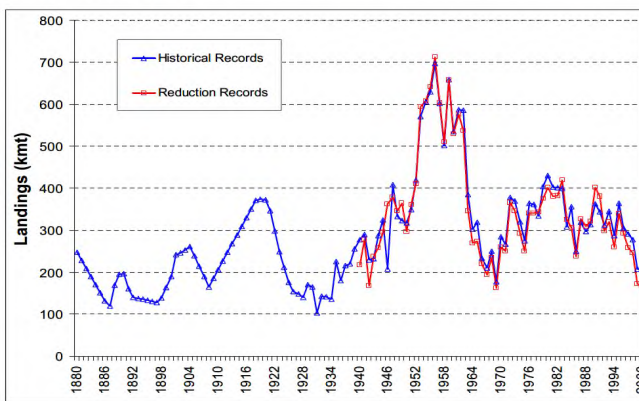
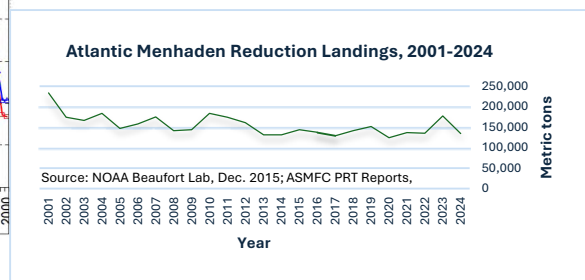


Figure 3



This is not a case in which VMRC and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (“ASMFC”) have turned a blind eye to their management responsibilities. In fact, both within the Bay and throughout the range of the stock, active measures have been taken to keep harvest levels well below historic levels (19% of peak landings and a third of harvest during the 1980s and 1990s), periods when everyone recognizes the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem was in far better shape. No one can credibly argue that management of this resource has been irresponsible nor that the reduction sector has not made significant sacrifices to conserve menhaden.

As a final introductory matter, the ASMFC is currently undertaking a review of the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap and has been appropriated \$2.5 million to study the Bay fishery, while additional research funding is being considered by the General Assembly. A team of leading menhaden researchers are developing a research “roadmap” under the auspices of the National Science Foundation-affiliated Science Center for Marine Fisheries. It would not be appropriate for the VMRC to get ahead of these processes. Given that the relief Petitioner requests would devastate Virginia’s historic menhaden reduction fishery and cause grave economic harm to the Northumberland community at a time when jobs are scarce and Virginia citizens are struggling with inflation, the precautionary approach is to maintain the status quo.

Omega Protein and Ocean Harvesters respectfully request that the Commission deny the Petition.

### **The Companies’ Detailed Arguments in Opposition**

The Petition relies on two fundamentally flawed premises. The first is that the amorphous Public Trust Doctrine “requires” the Virginia Marine Resource Commission (“VMRC” or “Commission”) to undertake specific actions, beyond those set forth in the Commission’s governing statutes. It does not. When the General Assembly wants the VMRC to employ this doctrine it specifies so in statute and has not done so with respect to the Commission’s fisheries management responsibilities.

Secondly, Petitioner claims the Commission has failed to meet its obligations under the statute. As the Circuit Court for the City of Richmond has just recently held, VMRC’s management of the menhaden resource is fully compliant with the law; that is, the Commission has both acted within its legal authority and its actions are supported by information in the record. As long as the VMRC continues to base its decisions on the best scientific information available – which explicitly can be that developed and utilized by the ASMFC – and, when it *chooses* to enact a regulation governing the menhaden fishery, is satisfied that the standards set forth in Section 28.2-203 are met, such decisions are lawful.

The “choosing” to regulate is important. The Petition contains a series of allegations that the current menhaden regulatory program is unlawful. Petitions for a new or amended regulation under the Virginia Administrative Process Act (“VAPA”), Va. Code, § 2.2-4007, are not an appropriate means of challenging a regulation. If the Petitioner believes a particular element of the VMRC’s regulatory program is contrary to law, the remedy is to challenge the implementing regulation within the time limits set forth in law and the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Petitioner seeks to evade this burden and the statute of limitations (the 30-day window for

challenging 4 VAC 20-1270-35 having expired years ago) and put Commissioners in an untenable position. VMRC members are not judges and should not be put in the position of second guessing the legal determinations of the Attorney General's office.

The burden of a person petitioning for a rule under VAPA is to show that the regulatory action request is consistent with law and, in the case of a fishery regulation, is supported by the "best scientific, economic, biological and sociological information available." Va. Code 28.2-203(2). This Petition does not even attempt to meet this burden.

The Commission should reject the Petition on the grounds that it fails to demonstrate that the action requested is compliant with the law and is not supported by anything more than supposition about impacts of the fishery the defy over a century-and-a-half of experience. The VMRC should instead rely on the experts who advise both it and the ASMFC, as well as the legal advice provided by the Virginia Attorney General's office.

What follows are the Companies' detailed responses to Petitioner's Claims.

## **I. The Detailed Claims Petitioner Makes Are Supported by Neither Law Nor Fact**

**Claim 1:** "At the time VMRC approved continued industrial menhaden removal under 4 VAC 20-1270-35, it did not have—and still does not have—a Bay-wide estimate of menhaden biomass, age structure, spatial distribution, recruitment trends, or localized depletion risk."

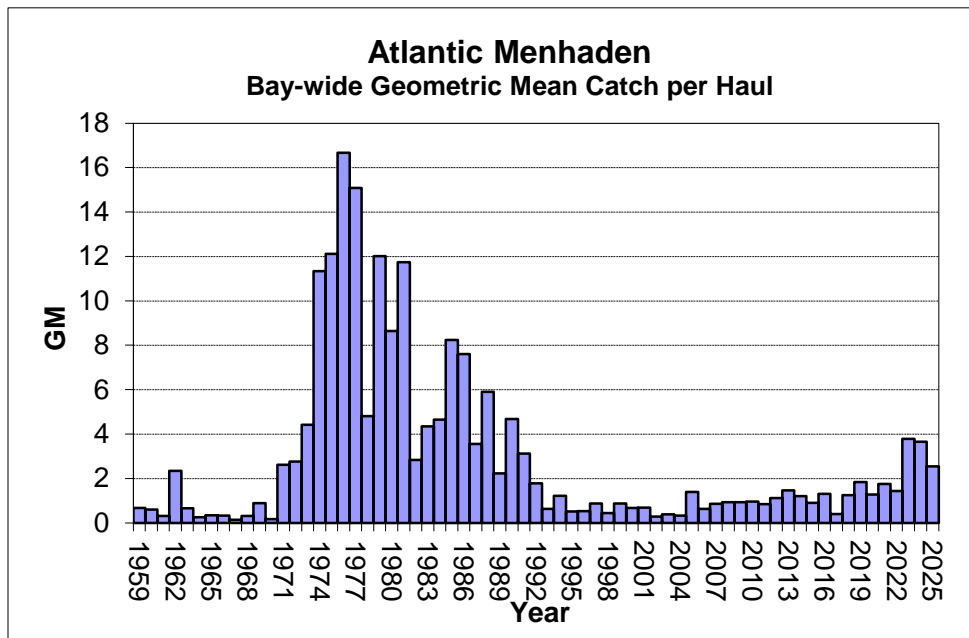
This is false and/or misleading on several counts:

- The VMRC did not "approve continued industrial menhaden removal." The right of the fishery to harvest menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay has been enshrined in Virginia law for over 150 years. When it was given authority over the fishery in 2020, the VMRC simply codified existing law into the regulations. There certainly was no basis for eliminating the Bay cap, which itself came to the VMRC as a precautionary recommendation of the ASMFC.
- Scientists actually have a good idea of the "age structure" of menhaden and "recruitment trends" in the Bay. In fact, the longest-term "young-of-year" indices used in the stock assessment all come from the Chesapeake Bay.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, it has been long established that the migratory menhaden stock stratifies by age when it begins its northly migration in spring. Menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay are comprised primarily of juveniles (age-0), ages-1 and -2, and some age-3 fish.<sup>3</sup>
- Not only does the VMRC have access to recruitment trends, but recruitment of juvenile menhaden has recently returned to levels not seen since 1990 when the striped bass stock was well into its recovery.

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<sup>2</sup> SEDAR 102, Atlantic Menhaden and Ecological Reference Points Final Stock Assessment Report, at 17 (Oct. 2025).

<sup>3</sup> Smith, J. & Vaughn, D., *in* Menhaden Species Team Background and Issue Briefs, at M/1-23-24, *available at* <https://www.mdsg.umd.edu/sites/default/files/files/EBFM-Menhaden-Briefs.pdf#page=33.13>.



Source: Maryland Department of Natural Resources

- It is true that there are no estimates of “Bay-wide menhaden biomass.” However, the concept itself is difficult to apply given that other than the juveniles that recruit to the Bay, the population varies with the annual migration – an event which has been occurring later in the past few years than historically – as well as immigration into and out of the Bay during the year. The cap itself is the means for allocating menhaden to predators.
- What is not true is that the issue of so-called “localized depletion” has not been studied. The original Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap, implemented in 2006, was instituted as a precautionary measure to allow time for researchers to study the potential for localized depletion.<sup>4</sup> The Menhaden Technical Committee developed a set of research questions and a series of studies were funded to address these questions, ending with a peer review in 2009. While the research was not able to definitively determine if harvest did or did not cause “localized depletion,” the reviewers were able to conclude that “given the high mobility of menhaden, the potential for localized depletion could only occur on a ‘relatively small scale for a relatively short time.’”<sup>5</sup>

**Claim 2:** “VMRC has not conducted a Bay-specific analysis of the consumption needs, prey thresholds, or reproductive-season energy requirements of forage-dependent species, including osprey, striped bass, bluefish, weakfish, red drum, and marine mammals.”

<sup>4</sup> Notably, that cap was set at the five-year average of Omega Protein’s Bay harvest from 2001-2005, which was 109,020 mt. That is well more than twice the current 51,000 mt cap.

<sup>5</sup> ASMFC, Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan, at 24 (Nov. 2017), available at <https://asmfc.org/resources/management-plan/atlantic-menhaden-amendment-3/>.

There has been enormous amounts of research on the forage base in the Chesapeake Bay. Just to name a few:

- NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office, Forage Action Team. “Forage status and trends report for the Chesapeake Bay.” (2023): This report represented the culmination of ten years of study by experts and activists (including a Chesapeake Bay Program representative). They reported: “Diet analyses determined that polychaetes were the most important prey taxa for a suite of Chesapeake Bay fish predators, but relative contributions of Atlantic menhaden and bay anchovy to diets have increased over time. Insects also play a large role in the diet of resident striped bass in the shallow waters of the Bay tributaries. Total annual consumption by all Chesapeake Bay predators examined (striped bass, summer flounder, Atlantic croaker, white perch, weakfish, spot) decreased substantially since 2004, leveling out around 2011.”
- Ihde, T. F., Houde, E. D., Bonzek, C. F., & Franke, E. (2015). Assessing the Chesapeake Bay forage base: existing data and research priorities. *STAC Publication*, (15-005): This report was produced by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, which advises NOAA’s Chesapeake Bay Program. It look at the forage species important to five “indicator” species, Summer Flounder, Striped Bass, Atlantic Croaker, White Perch, and Clearnose Skate. The most important forage fish (*i.e.*, the one important to 4 of the 5 species) was Bay anchovy. Nine other species were important to at least two of the five predators (in order of importance): Polychaetes, Mysids, Amphipods and Isopods, Mantis Shrimp, Spot, Weakfish, Sand shrimp, Atlantic Croaker, and Razor clams. “It was surprising to many workshop participants that Atlantic Menhaden was only determined to be important to one of the five predator species (Striped Bass) chosen for the present analysis.”
- Fabrizio, M. C., Tuckey, T. D., Bever, A. J., & MacWilliams, M. L. (2021). The extent of seasonally suitable habitats may limit forage fish production in a temperate estuary. *Frontiers in Marine Science*, 8: This study collected sixteen years of monthly survey and environmental data to assess the habitat of four key forage stocks in the Bay. Among other things, it found a significant increase in suitable habitat over time.

As these studies show, there are an enormous number of prey species available to the predators in the Chesapeake Bay. While polychaetes do not grab headlines, they are enormously important to many predators, and especially so to striped bass. So too are gizzard shad, bay anchovy, spotted sea trout, and Atlantic croaker.

It is also important to keep in mind that many predators are also prey. For instance, the United States Geological Survey (“USGS”) reported to the ASMFC that striped bass edged out menhaden in importance to osprey populations on Poplar island. Indeed, menhaden was not the primary forage for any of the osprey populations reported on by the USGS. And while Dr. Bryan Watts (alone) has implicated the fishery in the recent decline in osprey nesting success, the fact is that most of the mortalities occur prior to the start of the reduction fishing season. More troubling has been the later arrival of menhaden to the Chesapeake Bay in the past two

years (the reasons for which are under investigation). Eliminating the reduction fishery will not solve osprey's problems.

**Claim 3:** “These Bay-specific abundance and ecological-dependence data are necessary to evaluate the effects of industrial forage removal in the Chesapeake Bay and are required prior to authorizing such removal to fulfill VMRC’s public trust and statutory management obligations.”

Setting aside the legal questions discussed elsewhere, it is absolutely not the case that “Bay-specific abundance and ecological-dependence data are necessary” for the VMRC and the ASMFC to manage the Atlantic menhaden resource. Both management bodies must adhere to the standard that their decisions be based on the “best scientific [and other] information available.” *See, e.g.,* Va. Code § 28.2-203 (emphasis added). As explained below, this standard only requires that VMRC not ignore available information, not that it is barred from acting in the face of uncertainty. If that were the case, no fishing – commercial or recreational – would be allowed because all lack perfect information.

It is both lawful and reasonable to allow the reduction fleet to operate in the Chesapeake Bay. The entire point of the reduction fishery cap is to maintain harvests well below historic levels as a matter of precaution. It is reasonable to presume, given that the Bay has supported larger populations of predators when reduction harvests were as much as five times current levels, that maintaining this fishery at historically low levels is sustainable. The fact that striped bass are currently overfished (and thus demand for forage reduced) and the menhaden population is higher than at many times in the past 75 years only reinforces the rationality of this approach.

Finally, conservation is not the VMRC’s sole mandate. It is also directed to support the fishing industry, reap the economic benefits of Virginia’s marine resources, and ensure the socio-economic health of the Commonwealth’s fishing communities. The constrained Bay reduction fishery meets all these objectives.

**Claim 4:** “VMRC did not evaluate or document the economic impacts of industrial menhaden removal on the Chesapeake Bay bait fishery or on Bay-dependent economic activities, including sportfishing, bird watching, and crabbing, when approving reduction fishing under 4 VAC 20-1270-35.”

Once again, VMRC did not “approv[e] reduction fishing.” This practice has been allowed since the 1800s. That said, it is also not true that there has not been economic analysis of the fishery. The Dr. James Kirkley of the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (“VIMS”) undertook a comprehensive study of the social and economic importance of menhaden. His work is readily available.<sup>6</sup>

**Claim 5:** “The Chesapeake Bay functions as a primary nursery for Atlantic menhaden, and effective management must ensure menhaden are not removed before reaching reproductive

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<sup>6</sup> Kirkley, James E. “An assessment of the social and economic importance of menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) (Latrobe, 1802) in Chesapeake Bay region.” (2011), available at <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/items/87c89c9b-108b-40d3-9565-1efa388b1a7f>.

maturity and that older age classes are maintained to support recruitment stability and ecosystem function. VMRC’s current authorization framework contains no measures designed to ensure such protection.”

The statement is correct inasmuch as it states the Chesapeake Bay is “a” (and not “the”) primary nursery for Atlantic menhaden, a contention frequently made. One study using genetic data “found that estuaries in the Northeast and the Chesapeake Bay each contributed 31% of the age-1 menhaden, and Delaware Bay contributed 13% and the Southeast contributed 25%, on average, for the 3 years of this study.”<sup>7</sup> Other research shows that changes in phase of the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation are correlated with recruitment success in either the Mid-Atlantic or Southern New England.<sup>8</sup>

**Figure 4:** From Cadrin (2020)

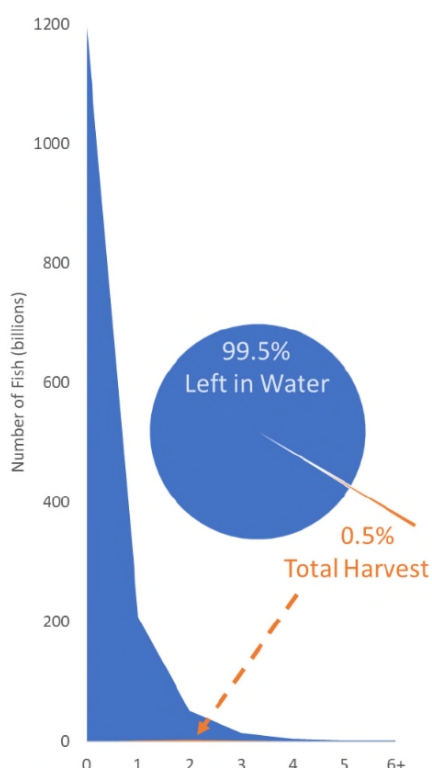


Figure 1. Number of fish harvested by the fishery compared to population size at age 0 (years 2008-2017)

That aside, to the extent Petitioner is focusing on recruitment, this is a matter utterly unimpacted by the menhaden fishery. Young-of-year menhaden are not taken by the fishery (although in years of high recruitment, a fraction of percent may show up in the landings). Spawning occurs offshore and the larvae are transported in by winds and ocean currents. Beyond that, even age-1 menhaden are partially sexually mature; they are fully mature when they are late age-2. Older, larger menhaden targeted by the northern bait fishery produce exponentially more eggs than do the younger fish.<sup>9</sup>

More to the point, prior research has estimated that the entire menhaden fishery (bait + reduction) takes only about 0.5% of the total menhaden population. Less than one percent of the age-1 menhaden are caught and only 7% of the age-2 fish.<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that Dr. Cadrin’s analysis was based on the peer-reviewed 2019 benchmark stock assessment. Due to a reevaluation of the natural mortality rate (M) in the latest 2025 stock assessment, the entire time-series estimate of Atlantic menhaden

<sup>7</sup> Anstead, Kristen A., Jason J. Schaffler, and Cynthia M. Jones. “Coast-wide nursery contribution of new recruits to the population of Atlantic Menhaden.” *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 145.3 (2016): 627-636.

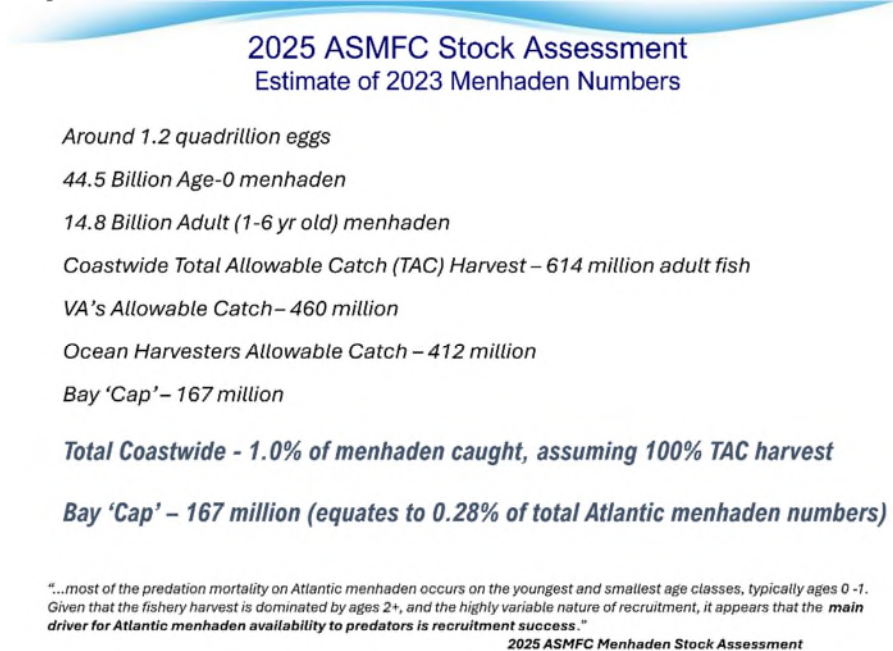
<sup>8</sup> Buchheister, A., Miller, T. J., Houde, E. D., Secor, D. H., & Latour, R. J. (2016). Spatial and temporal dynamics of Atlantic menhaden (*Brevoortia tyrannus*) recruitment in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 73(4), 1147-1159. Interestingly, environmental factors favoring menhaden recruitment disfavor striped bass recruitment, the former of which has been strong while striped bass recruitment has been poor. ASMFC, Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment and Review Panel Reports, Stock Assess. Rpt. 10-02 (May 2010) (citing Wood (2000), Wood et al. (2004), Austin (2002), Wood and Austin (2009)).

<sup>9</sup> See generally Smith & Vaughn, *supra* n.3.

<sup>10</sup> Cadrin, Steve, “Providing for Forage of Atlantic Menhaden” (July 2020), available at [https://scemfis.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/forage\\_atlantic\\_menhaden.pdf](https://scemfis.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/forage_atlantic_menhaden.pdf).

abundance has been scaled down.<sup>11</sup> Thus, as described in Figure 5, the same analysis would result in an estimate closer to 1% of the current menhaden population in numbers, assuming the total allowable harvest (“TAC”) is caught, which it has not been in recent years.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 5:**



The current management system is well designed to support the ecosystem and foster ongoing recruitment. For prospective, menhaden spawn year-round and produce trillions of eggs.

## **II. The Public Trust Doctrine Has No Application to the VMRC’s Fisheries Management Responsibilities**

The Petitioner suggests that the “public trust doctrine” places limitations on the Commonwealth in the ways it may choose to manage the migratory menhaden resource while in Virginia waters. As the Virginia Supreme Court noted in one of its opinions cited by Petitioner, “The common rights in a public fishery are at all times subject to the disposal of the legislature, and it may deprive the public of the right at its pleasure. This may be done by granting exclusive rights to individuals, or by dealing with the water in such a way that the fishery is destroyed.” *Commonwealth v. Newport News*, 158 Va. 521, 552-53 (1932) (quoting Farnham on Waters and Water Rights, sec. 407).

Of course, no marine resource commissioner nor anyone in the menhaden sector seek to “destroy” the fishery. Rather, Atlantic menhaden is the most conservatively managed forage

<sup>11</sup> See ASMFC, “Atlantic Menhaden FAQ,” at 1 (2025), available at <https://asmfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Menhaden-FAQ-Oct2025.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> This analysis based on converting the TACs into numbers of fish based on an average weight per menhaden of 0.67 lbs., the standard employed by NMFS. See SEDAR. 2020. SEDAR 69 – Atlantic Menhaden Benchmark Stock Assessment Rpt., at 67(Jan. 2020), available at <http://sedarweb.org/sedar-69>.

fishery in the United States and, perhaps, the world. It is certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council. This certification is based on the facts that it is the only forage stock explicitly managed for its role in the ecosystem; is governed by precautionary catch limits (including the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap); and has been proven to have low bycatch of non-target species.

The public trust doctrine is not a self-executing source of law that trumps Virginia’s laws or constitution. When the General Assembly wants the doctrine to be applied, it makes its application specific in law. As the Virginia Court of Appeals, Norfolk Division, recently noted:

The General Assembly did not include any “public trust” or “public interest” language in Code § 28.2-600, even though it has expressly directed VMRC to consider the public interest in other related statutes, such as when the agency issues general oyster leases, see Code § 28.2-607 (requiring VMRC to consider whether “the assignment is in the public interest”), and issues permits for other bottomland uses, see Code § 28.2-1205(A) (requiring VMRC to “consider the public and private benefits of the proposed project” and that it “exercise its authority under this section consistent with the public trust doctrine”). It declined to include comparable language in Code § 28.2-600. “[W]hen the General Assembly has used specific language in one instance, but omits that language or uses different language when addressing a similar subject elsewhere in the Code, we must presume that the difference in the choice of language was intentional.” *RGR, LLC v. Settle*, 288 Va. 260, 295, 764 S.E.2d 8, 28-29 (2014) (quoting *Zinone v. Lee’s Crossing Homeowners Ass’n*, 282 Va. 330, 337, 714 S.E.2d 922, 925 (2011)).

*City of Virginia Beach v. VMRC*, Rec. No. 1648-17-1 Aug. 21, 2018). The same holds true for Chapter 2 of Title 28.2, which, among other things, sets forth the Commission’s authority to manage fisheries and sets forth the standards governing that process. Nowhere in these laws does the General Assembly direct the Commission to apply the public trust doctrine or free-standing public interest standards in carrying these responsibilities.

In fact, while the petition claims to find a “public trust” duty in § 28.2-201 (setting forth the VMRC’s powers), the very first subsection makes clear that one of its duties is to “[a]dopt regulations ... necessary to promote the general welfare of the seafood industry.” *Id.* § (1). Conservation is certainly a primary objective of the law, but equally important mandates are to promote the commercial fishing industry and reap economic benefits from the Commonwealth’s marine resources. *See, e.g.*, § 28.2-202(2) (VMRC should “[p]rovide for the development of programs designed to enhance and improve commercial and sport fisheries in Virginia’s tidal waters.”); *see also* § 28.2-203(1) (regulations should avoid overfishing and achieve “optimum yield” or “the amount of fish or shellfish which will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Commonwealth”) *id.* § (7) (regulations “shall, where practicable, minimize regulatory burdens which inhibit innovation, expansion, and normal business operations”).

The Public Trust Doctrine has no application to this matter.

### III. Responses to Petitioner’s Legal Claims

Sections B through F of the Petition purport to “prove” to the Commission that it has acted unlawfully. It has not and, as mentioned, it is not the VMRC’s role to interpret law. Some of the arguments are patently frivolous, such as that in **Section B** which claims that (somehow) adoption of ASMFC recommendations “risks undermining coast-wide management objectives.” Here and throughout the Petition, it is alleged that VMRC has heightened duties because of the Public Trust Doctrine. As explained above, the Commission’s duty is to adhere to the statute, with the advice of the Attorney General’s office, not to take hyper-precautionary actions based on Petitioner’s idiosyncratic view of the public good. The Companies shall briefly address these arguments.

As in prior petitions, **Section C** overreads Virginia Code § 28.2-204, which gives the Commission the authority to collect fisheries statistics “from any source.” While nothing in this section prohibits the Commission from “commissioning” studies, its financial resources are not unlimited and the law imposes no obligation on the VMRC to create information in order to discharge its duties (about which, more below). As noted above, there is already a wealth of “Bay-specific ... ecological-dependence information,” as well as fishery-dependent and independent information of Atlantic menhaden generated by the ASMFC and its scientific advisors. Should the General Assembly choose to fund a project to initiate a menhaden survey or project to estimate its abundance in the Chesapeake Bay, that information will undoubtedly inform future decisions. However, the Commission is not prohibited from basing its decisions on available information and is certainly not required to dedicate funds to gathering data the Petitioner desires.

In terms of monitoring the reduction fishery’s catch, Petitioner is apparently unaware that for decades, the National Marine Fisheries Service (“NMFS”) has had a fulltime observer at the Omega Protein plant in Reedville to monitor and sample landings. Nor, apparently, is she aware that the VMRC itself has recently overtaken this responsibility. Thus, the concern Petitioner raises about “independent verification” has been addressed. This sampling program is one check on “bycatch” but there have been a number of studies of the reduction fishery purse seine fishery that all conclude incidental catch of non-target species is exceedingly low.<sup>13</sup> As NMFS itself notes: “The menhaden fishery is one of the most selective, and effective fisheries, with little bycatch. Atlantic croaker is the principal species caught as bycatch; the incidence is considered insignificant.”<sup>14</sup>

The final allegation in section C is puzzling. The claim is that the VMRC does not evaluate “cumulative menhaden removals from the Chesapeake Bay by combining industrial landings with harvest levels from the Bay’s menhaden bait fishery.” Virginia is allocated a percentage (75.21%) of the coastwide TAC, and that allocation is distributed among the various sectors under a formula adopted by the General Assembly back in 2013 (which, parenthetically, allocated the bait fisheries

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<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Austin, Herb, James Kirkley, and Jon Lucy. "By-catch and the fishery for Atlantic menhaden." (1994), available at <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/entities/publication/4294a039-9509-4137-8ae4-a64198c517b0>; see also LGL Ecological Research Associates, Inc., “Characterization of Bycatch for the Menhaden Purse Seine Fishery Occurring off the Coast of Louisiana” (June 13, 2025), available at [https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Saltwater\\_Fish/Characterization-of-Bycatch-for-the-Menhaden-Purse-Seine-Fishery-Occurring-off-the-Coast-of-Louisiana-LGL.pdf](https://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/assets/Resources/Publications/Saltwater_Fish/Characterization-of-Bycatch-for-the-Menhaden-Purse-Seine-Fishery-Occurring-off-the-Coast-of-Louisiana-LGL.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/atlantic-menhaden/commercial>.

a higher share of the quota than it historically harvested). Landings by each sector are reported to the VMRC and that data is used in the stock assessment. It is unclear what Petitioner is seeking.

**Section D** alleges a violation of 28.2-204.1, which provides the Commission authority to “limit the number of gear licenses or permits to fish” for certain fisheries and enumerates factors VMRC must consider when doing so. Specifically, the Petition claims: “In the absence of Bay-specific information sufficient to assess resource abundance and impacts on dependent species and fisheries, the regulatory record cannot demonstrate that the factors enumerated in § 28.2-204.1(5)–(6) have been considered with respect to industrial menhaden harvest in the Chesapeake Bay.”

Setting aside the lack of support for the allegation the VMRC must assess any of these factors as to menhaden only when they are in the Bay (as opposed to the stock as a whole), this section does not apply to menhaden licenses. Section 28.2-204.1 specifically excludes menhaden licenses and thus these factors do not apply to this fishery. *See* Va. Code § 28.2-204.1(A) (containing a specific exemption for “licenses issued pursuant to subdivisions 1 and 2 of § 28.2-402,” which pertains to the licensing of menhaden nets). Needless to say, the Commission’s licensing regulations are lawful.

By far, the most extensive and misguided of the arguments are contained in **Section E**, which alleges violations of the standards for management set forth in Virginia Code § 28.2-203. In the course of addressing the problems with these arguments, the Companies take this opportunity to make their case that the requested relief – a moratorium on reduction harvest in the Chesapeake Bay – is itself inconsistent with the standards the law requires the Commission to apply.

To be perfectly clear, menhaden fishing in the Bay represents a vital element of Ocean Harvesters’ fishing and business plans. There are not enough days in which the weather in the ocean environment is sufficiently calm to safely harvest menhaden in sufficient quantities to remain a viable business. The reason that the Chesapeake Bay became the center of the menhaden reduction industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is not only the reliable amount of fish annually migrating in, but also the relative shelter the Bay provides for fishermen to safely work. Additionally, this is a “sight fishery” in which the spotter planes and vessels must be able to see schools of menhaden. Windy, stormy, and overcast conditions that make operations impossible are much more frequent in the ocean.

Thus, given that Atlantic menhaden have shown not be overfished or subject to overfishing, *in an ecosystem context* no less, by one of the most data rich and well tested assessment models, the first standard requires the VMRC to obtain “optimum yield,” or “the amount of fish . . . which will provide the greatest overall benefit to the Commonwealth.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(1). Depriving the Commonwealth millions of dollars in revenues and hundreds of jobs from a proven sustainable fishery falls far short of this standard.

Petitioner prefers that the Commission define optimum yield solely in terms of that part of the population that inhabits the Bay at any given time. Even if, as a matter of marine science, it were possible to determine biological reference points for a subset of a population (a matter being

investigated by the ASMFC's Ecological Reference Point Working Group), there is no scientific basis for doing so now.

The second standard requires VMRC to base decisions “upon the best scientific, economic, biological and sociological information available.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(2). The best science, based on years of research, including the largest tagging study ever conducted in the United States, is that Atlantic menhaden are comprised of single migratory stock.<sup>15</sup> Further, that stock is neither overfished nor undergoing overfishing.

For its part, it has been recognized that the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap is not based on scientific evidence but is rather a “compromise” instituted as a precautionary measure to avoid the types of harms with which Petitioner is concerned. While not based on scientific evidence, the cap has reasonably been determined to provide such protection by maintaining levels of harvest at the lowest end of the range of harvests that—it cannot be overstated—*have been continuously occurring in the Bay for 150 years*. Under this standard, the Commission may rely on the fact that, over this stretch of time, the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem has supported both menhaden harvests magnitudes larger than today *and* higher populations of predator species.

Lastly, but far from least, the law requires VMRC to also consider “economic” and “sociological” information. Thus, a decision not to eliminate a historic, as well as culturally and economically important, fishery is entirely consistent with this standard.

Throughout her submission, Petitioner repeatedly claims the Commission must conduct studies and concoct information to manage the menhaden fishery. This is not the law. Federal courts have interpreted the MSA equivalent standard, National Standard 2,<sup>16</sup> as requiring only “that rules issued by the [agency] be based on a thorough review of all the relevant information available at the time the decision was made, and insures that the [agency] does not ‘disregard superior data’ in reaching its conclusion.” *The Ocean Conservancy v. Gutierrez*, 394 F. Supp. 2d 147, 157 (D.D.C. 2005) (citations omitted), *aff’d*, 488 F.3d 1020 (D.C. Cir. 2007). “Absent some indication that superior or contrary data was available and that the agency ignored such information, a challenge to the agency’s collection of and reliance on scientific information will fail.” *N. Carolina Fisheries Ass’n v. Gutierrez*, 518 F. Supp. 2d 62, 80 (D.D.C. 2007) (citations omitted). VMRC’s management of the fishery complies with these standards.

The third standard requires that “[t]o the extent practicable, an individual stock of fish shall be managed as a unit throughout the territorial waters of the Commonwealth, and interrelated stocks of fish shall be managed as a unit or in close coordination.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(3). This is exactly how menhaden are managed. The Commonwealth’s allocation is distributed among the various user groups and, for the largest sector, the reduction fishery, it distributes catch between the Bay and the ocean. The “unit” of menhaden in the Bay is not a different “unit” from those in Virginia’s ocean waters. They are all part of a unitary stock which is managed as an important forage stock (*i.e.*, in “close coordination” with “interrelated stocks of fish”). The law requires

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<sup>15</sup> SEDAR 102, *supra* n.2, at 41.

<sup>16</sup> 16 U.S.C. § 1851(a)(2) (“Conservation and management measures shall be based upon the best scientific information available.”).

nothing more, and treating menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay differently may well run afoul of this standard.

The fourth standard requires allocations to be “fair and equitable to all fishermen..., promote conservation..., and [be] carried out in such manner that no person acquires an excessive share of such privileges.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(4). Petitioner, as with those previously asking the Commission to regulate the reduction sector out of existence, claims that its large allocation (just over 90% of Virginia’s share of the coastal quota) is “unfair” and “excessive.” In fact, it is not unfair that the General Assembly allocated each sector the proportion of harvest it historically landed (albeit granting a slightly higher percentage to the bait sector) any more than it was for the ASMFC to allocate Virginia the proportion of quota it historically harvested (albeit while slowly reallocating Virginia’s share to other states over time).

The allocation standard does not require every participant to receive an equal share. It must be read in conjunction with the other standards, such as that requiring use of the “best information” and the need to achieve optimum yield. Like Virginia, federal and interstate fisheries managers look at historic and current use of, and dependence on, a resource when allocating resources. It’s an objective way of making such decisions rooted in data and to ensure fairness. The opposite would be to arbitrarily distribute resources, such as to favored groups. This the law does not allow.

Distributing fishery allocations on the basis of use is the best means of ensuring that the optimum yield from a fishery is obtained. Here, allocating the bait sector much larger shares would prevent the VMRC from maximizing the fishery’s “overall benefit to the Commonwealth” because the allocation would go underutilized. Jobs and economic activity in the reduction sector would be lost with no counterbalancing gains in the bait sector. In short, granting Petitioner the relief requested – preventing Ocean Harvesters from operating in the Chesapeake Bay – would effectuate an enormous reallocation that is inconsistent with this standard.

The fifth and seventh standards are interrelated and each weighs heavily against granting Petitioner relief. The first of these provides: “Conservation and management shall, where practicable, promote efficiency in the utilization of fishery resources, except that no such measure shall have economic allocation as its sole purpose.” Va Code § 28.2-203(5). Purse seining is an extremely efficient means of harvesting menhaden, in terms of both volume and in avoiding incidental catch. The Bay fishery is even more efficient because it takes far less fuel, food, and time to harvest a given amount of menhaden in the Bay as compared to the ocean.<sup>17</sup> Instituting a prohibition on the Chesapeake Bay would do the opposite of what this standard requires – mandating inefficiency by regulation.

The seventh standard instructs VMRC to “minimize regulatory burdens which inhibit innovation, expansion, and normal business operations.” Va. Code s 28.2-203(7). There is little need to belabor this point. Ending the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery would be an enormous regulatory burden that would not “inhibit” Omega Protein’s and Ocean Harvesters’ normal operations, it would end them.

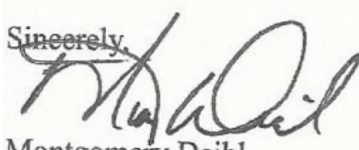

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<sup>17</sup> As noted above, the allocation is based on historic participation in the fishery, not “solely” economics.

The final standard provides that “[c]onservation and management measures shall take into account variations among, and contingencies in, fisheries, fishery resources, and catches.” Va. Code § 28.2-203(6). Petitioner’s claim is that a “static cap” does not consider the dynamic Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. First, the cap is not “static.” It has been reduced three times from over 100,000 mt to 51,000 mt, and the ASMFC is considering measures that may reduce it further. Second, the fact that there is a cap is a recognition of the “variations” and “contingencies” in the fishery and the fishery resources. This standard requires no more than a recognition that fisheries are dynamic and that new information should be incorporated into management decisions. This is exactly how the VMRC manages this resource in conjunction with the ASMFC. The law requires nothing more.

In summary, a decision to terminate the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery, and with it an industry which is an integral part of Virginia’s history would be arbitrary, capricious, and inconsistent with the standards by which the Commission is charged with carrying out its duties. It would violate the requirement to obtain optimum yield and be based on no scientific information whatsoever. In fact, by imposing a ban, the VMRC would have to ignore economic facts and socioeconomic impacts. It would manage menhaden while in the Bay differently than when in Virginia’s coastal waters, constitute an excessive and unfair allocation to the bait sector, mandate inefficiency, maximize regulatory burdens, disrupt business operations, and quash innovation and expansion. In short, the relief sought is simply inconsistent with the law.

For all these reasons, the Companies respectfully request the Commission to deny the Petition.

<p>Sincerely,  Montgomery Deihl Chief Executive Officer Ocean Harvesters</p>	<p> John Held Executive Vice President-General Counsel Omega Protein, Inc.</p>
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