FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 28, 2020
Press contact: Ellen Bolen, Deputy Commissioner
757-788-9772

"Virginia Marine Resources Commission Approved Menhaden Regulation and avoids industry shutdown"

Today, during the first ever electronic meeting, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (MRC) voted unanimously (9-0) to approve a menhaden regulation that brings Virginia into compliance with federal regulations and avoids a disastrous industry shutdown.

This was the first time the Commission has taken action on menhaden since the General Assembly passed legislation in March that gave authority to MRC to set quotas and management measures for the species.

"I applaud the Commission's decision to take swift and decisive action to bring Virginia into compliance and avoid implementation of the moratorium that would have hurt Virginia businesses," said Commissioner Steven G. Bowman. **"We strive to be a conservation leader and we will continue to manage this fishery based on the best available science to ensure a healthy future for the coastal communities who depend on a sustainable fisheries and a healthy Chesapeake Bay."**

The US Secretary of Commerce found Virginia out of compliance in December of 2019 and gave the Commonwealth six months to come into compliance with the management plan set forth by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Had Virginia not taken action, the entire menhaden fishery would have shut down on June 17, 2020 impacting workers and other fisheries who rely on menhaden for bait.

"An important part of this process has been public input and I thank everyone on the management advisory committee and the public who provided comments and insights to staff," said Commissioner Bowman.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will notify the Secretary of Commerce that Virginia has come into compliance.

An Agency of the Natural Resources Secretariat
www.mrc.virginia.gov
Telephone (757) 247-2200 (757) 247-2292 V/TDD Information and Emergency Hotline 1-800-541-4646 V/TDD