

SUPPORT BILL HJ572

MENHADEN MANAGEMENT STUDY

Delegate Barry Knight (R-81st District)

Reasons to support HJ572:

1. HJ572 directs the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the appropriate means of managing the various menhaden fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.
2. Menhaden are the only finfish in state waters not currently managed by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission or the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.
3. Currently, management of menhaden is shared by the General Assembly, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. As such, even small annual changes in menhaden fishing regulations require an Act of the General Assembly.
4. This study bill is a thoughtful approach to help determine the best framework for managing this important fishery.

The Significance of Menhaden for Virginia and the Bay

Menhaden are herring-like fish that form large schools and are normally found in the Chesapeake Bay from spring to fall. Menhaden are a primary food source for striped bass, bluefish, sharks, ospreys, brown pelicans, and dolphin.

In addition to their ecological importance, the menhaden fishery is very important economically to the Commonwealth. Virginia's menhaden fisheries represent the largest fishing industry in the state and are one of the largest in the United States.

Menhaden abundance is estimated to be at historical lows threatening the ecological health of the Chesapeake Bay, jobs, and economic activity throughout Virginia.



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