

October 20, 2017

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Office of the Governor
State Street and Washington Ave.
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

As charter boat captains and fishing guides that fish in New York waters, we are writing to support ecological management of the most important fish in the sea: Atlantic menhaden. While we and our fishing clients pursue many species of fish including striped bass, bluefish, summer flounder, tuna, and sharks, many of these most sought after fish depend on healthy prey populations including menhaden.

In New York, fishing is not just a pastime and cultural anchor for 1.8 million residents, it is also a huge economic driver that supports more than 32,000 jobs and nearly \$4.5 billion in economic activity. As guides, we spend tens of thousands of dollars every year on boats, maintenance, tackle, bait and lures, gas, and insurance. Our clients also buy equipment, book hotels and spend time in our coastal communities. The dollars spent on fishing reverberate through our state's economy, but they depend on healthy fish populations.

Among the most important sources of food for game fish are menhaden. They are large, numerous and provide significant nutritional benefit for predators. After the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) noticed declines in menhaden population, they voted to put into place the first ever coast-wide catch limits in 2012. Since then, the menhaden population has rebounded, and game fish have followed.

Now, the ASMFC is considering how to manage menhaden for the future, including the possibility of using ecosystem based management to ensure enough menhaden remain in the ocean to satisfy the need of predators. So-called ecological reference points are a precedent-setting opportunity to stand up for New York's saltwater fishing economy. We strongly support Option E - the most scientifically supported interim ecological reference points. We cannot afford to wait until menhaden-specific reference points are developed and implemented years down the line. We must protect the gains we've made in menhaden in recent years and maintain the improved fishing we and our clients are starting to see as a result.

We know your personal passion for fishing in New York, and we ask you to stand with your fellow anglers to support ecological management of Menhaden in Amendment three to the ASMFC's Menhaden Management Plan.

Signed,

Paul Dixon, To the Point Charters, Montauk, NY
Vin Catalano, JC Charters, Montauk, NY
John Tondra, Tie One On Charters, Montauk, NY
Danny Reich, One Last Cast Charters, Jamaica Bay, NY
David Blinken, North Flats Guiding, East Hampton, NY

Craig Cantelmo, Van Staal Reels, New York

Brendan McCarthy, Urban Fly Guides, New York, NY

Ken Rafferty, Rafferty Fishing, East Hampton, NY

Andrew Derr, Long Island on the Fly, Montauk, NY

Tom Falco, Jenny E Charters, Babylon, NY

Jason Dapra, Blitz Bound Charters, Montauk, NY

Brian Goulart, Point to Point Charters, Montauk, NY

Nick Ribico, Catskill Angler, Montauk, NY