



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT

Atlantic Menhaden Protection

A.2571 - Englebright

S. 2317 – Kaminsky

An ACT to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to the taking of menhaden

JUSTIFICATION

While very small, Atlantic Menhaden (AKA bunker) are one of the most important species in the ocean. Menhaden are a major food source for whales, dolphins, coastal sharks, predatory fish, seals, and seabirds. They are also a bait fish that support commercial, recreational, and for-hire fisheries, as well as fishing support businesses.

Prior to 2012, Atlantic Menhaden were overfished to just a small percentage of their historic levels. Efforts to restore menhaden populations have been very successful in recent years, with Menhaden reaching historic levels in New York's waters. The restoration of menhaden populations has contributed to the return of whales and dolphins to NY's waters, which has served as a boon to the state's tourism industry.

Since the population of menhaden has been so low, purse seines have not been used in New York for several years, but as the populations grow, there is significant concern that the use of purse seines will occur once again. The use of purse seines would have a significant adverse impact on marine life, including whales and dolphins. Purse seines would also negatively impact marine fisheries and the jobs that depend upon them.

This legislation would prohibit harvesting Atlantic Menhaden with purse seines in New York State waters (the DEC can provide a temporary waiver if there is an imminent threat of a fishkill). This is an important and timely step that eight other Atlantic coastal states have already taken to continue rebuilding the Atlantic Menhaden population. Protecting sustainable levels of menhaden is critical to the health of the ecosystem and our regional economy.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTS A.2571/S.2317 – ATLANTIC MENHADEN PROTECTION

CCE is an 80,000 member non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization that works to empower communities and advocate solutions that protect public health and the natural environment

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