

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Nov. 3, 2025

Dear President Trump,

America's identity is inseparable from the water. From the blue crabs of the Chesapeake Bay to the striped bass that draw anglers to our coastal shores, our marine resources are not just a source of pride – they are the foundation of a way of life. For generations, Virginians like us have relied on our waters to fish, work, provide for our families, and pass along traditions to our children. But this legacy is now in jeopardy.

A single foreign-controlled company has been allowed to operate a fleet of industrial factory ships off our coast, stripping our Chesapeake Bay of its most essential species: Atlantic Menhaden. These small bait fish are the linchpin of the marine food chain. When they disappear, so do the striped bass, the bluefish, the ospreys, the dolphins, and so do the jobs and small businesses that depend on them.

This isn't just about conservation, it's about economics. The industrial menhaden reduction fleet contributes a few hundred jobs in the region. But in doing so, they're threatening thousands more in Virginia's billion-dollar recreational fishing and coastal tourism economy. From bait shops and tackle stores to charter captains and boat dealers, the menhaden crisis affects the entire ecosystem of small businesses that fuel our coastal communities.

To make matters worse, Virginia is now the only state on the Atlantic Coast still allowing this kind of industrial menhaden harvest. As a result, the Virginia bay and coastline gets hammered all summer long, while political pressure from powerful interests blocks reforms time and time again.

Virginia's 320,000 saltwater anglers and thousands more tourists have become increasingly frustrated. For example, when the Virginia Institute of Marine Science proposed common-sense studies to understand the effects of menhaden reduction fishing on the Chesapeake Bay, their efforts were stonewalled by lobbying, campaign cash, and powerful voices in Richmond.

The science is clear: ospreys are starving, striped bass populations are down, recreational catch rates are declining, and recreational fishing charters are down...it is painfully obvious there are no longer enough menhaden in the bay to support both a healthy ecosystem and a large-scale industrial fishery. Still, the status quo holds.

We need leadership. And right now, you are the only person with the power to break through the noise and do what's right. You have the opportunity to take bold executive action by signing an order that would end harmful reduction fishing and leave these fish in the water to fulfill their ecological role rather than reduce them to animal feed.

This single action would restore balance to our marine environment, protect Virginia's coastal economy, and send a powerful message that America's resources are not for sale to foreign interests. It would also cement your place in history, not just as a champion for working Americans, but as a consequential conservation leader.

But make no mistake: powerful voices in Richmond are working behind the scenes to oppose this order. They will claim it's unnecessary, too aggressive, or that it's outside the federal scope. They're wrong, and they don't speak for the people of Virginia.

Virginia fishermen are watching. So are our families, our communities, and the next generation of anglers who deserve the same opportunities we've had.

President Trump, the choice is yours. Will you stand with Virginia's working families, or with foreign corporations and the politicians protecting them?

Sign the Executive Order. Protect the Bay. And make Virginia's waters great again.

Sincerely,



Mike Avery  
Virginia Saltwater Sportfishing Assn



Butch Pierce  
Great Bridge Fisherman's Assn



Dinkus Deane  
Virginia Anglers Club



Dennis Bagley  
Tidewater Anglers Club



Rob Allen  
Coastal Conservation Assn Virginia



Sam Graham  
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John Adametz  
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Austin Murphy  
Eastern Shore Anglers Club



Bob Burstein  
Virginia Beach Anglers Club