Brooke E. Lierman
Comptroller of Maryland

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News Release

Comptroller Lierman Calls for Stronger Protections for Chesapeake Bay Menhaden

Comptroller cites declines in osprey and striped bass and growing economic harm to Chesapeake Bay fishermen and businesses

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (November 9, 2026) — Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman is urging the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to reduce the number of menhaden that industrial fishing operations can catch in the Chesapeake Bay. Comptroller Lierman supports a proposal that would cut the Chesapeake Bay's menhaden industrial catch limit by up to half and spread fishing more evenly throughout the season. The Commission is expected to vote on the proposal this week.

"Too many menhaden are being taken out of the Chesapeake Bay, and too few are left for the osprey, striped bass, and local fishermen whose livelihoods depend on them," said **Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman**. "I am asking the Commission to lower the industrial catch limit in the Chesapeake Bay, spread the catch out over the fishing season, and revisit the limit every three years."

Menhaden are small fish that play a big role in the Chesapeake Bay. They help keep the water clean and are a main food source for osprey and striped bass, both of which are declining in Maryland. Yet foreign-owned industrial operations operating the industrial "reduction fishery" continue to catch menhaden on an enormous scale.

The decline is also hurting Maryland's economy. Local menhaden fishermen have seen their catches drop by more than 80%, threatening family businesses passed down for

generations. Crabbers who rely on menhaden for bait are struggling to find it at an affordable price.

Read Comptroller Lierman's letter to the Commission.

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Media Contacts

Jeremy Ames

james@marylandtaxes.gov

443-336-8162 (cell)

Bruce Nilson

bnilson@marylandtaxes.gov

443-254-6153 (cell)

Comptroller of Maryland, 80 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401, United States