

HOUSE No. 659

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Matthew A. Beaton

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act protecting the legal harvest of striped bass.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Matthew A. Beaton

11th Worcester

Kimberly N. Ferguson

1st Worcester

HOUSE No. 659

By Mr. Beaton of Shrewsbury, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 659) of Matthew A. Beaton and Kimberly N. Ferguson for legislation to to implement a striped bass commercial tagging program at the point of harvest. Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen

An Act protecting the legal harvest of striped bass.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

- 1 Whereas the illegal harvesting of striped bass has the potential to undermine the
- 2 sustainability of striped bass populations on the Atlantic Coast; and
- 3
- 4 Whereas the illegal harvest of striped bass has the potential to reduce the economic
- 5 opportunities of commercial fisherman who are legally participating in the fishery; and
- 6
- 7 Whereas at the February 2012 Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission (ASMFC) Striped
- 8 Bass Management Board meeting a motion was passed to initiate the development of an
- 9 addendum to incorporate the recommendations made by the Interstate Watershed Task Force
- 10 (IWTF) and the ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) on reducing the illegal harvest of
- 11 striped bass; and
- 12
- 13 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that all Atlantic States and jurisdictions implement
- 14 a uniform commercial tagging system where striped bass are harvested and landed for sale; and
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- 16 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that all fish harvested for sale be tagged
- 17 immediately upon possession at the point of harvest; and
- 18
- 19 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that the States and jurisdictions issue a set of
- 20 number tags based on a sound scientific sample of the average (mean) weight of legal-sized fish
- 21 harvested in open season for that type of gear divided into the weight quota; and
- 22

23 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended requiring all unused tags to be returned on annual
24 or seasonal basis and prohibit license renewal if unused tags are not returned; and
25
26 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended the implementation of license revocation or
27 suspension as a primary penalty for state or federal violations;; and
28
29 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that states and jurisdictions' law enforcement
30 officers have real-time access to tag numbers issued to each fisherman; and
31
32 Whereas at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission 2012 Summer Meeting a motion
33 was made to approve the IWTF and LEC recommendations for a uniform commercial tagging
34 program at the point of harvest; and
35
36 Whereas a motion was made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to substitute for this
37 option to tag at the point of harvest; and
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39 Whereas this motion was practically for no action to be taken now and for the states to act at
40 their own discretion at a later date; and
41
42 Whereas that motion passed by an 8 in favor, 7 opposed and 1 abstention and thus a motion for
43 no action was accepted;
44
45 Therefore be it resolved that the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Commission working with the
46 Massachusetts Director of Marine Fisheries adopt the recommendations made by the Interstate
47 Watershed Task Force and the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission Law Enforcement
48 Committee to implement a striped bass commercial tagging program at the point of harvest.