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Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe Joins Menhaden Fisheries Coalition Members in Reedville, Va.

Proclaims State's 2015 Allowable Menhaden Harvest Set at 158,700 Metric Tons

REEDVILLE, Va. -- June 4, 2015 -- Members of the Menhaden Fisheries Coalition joined the greater Reedville community today in welcoming Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, who issued an official proclamation marking Virginia's allowable menhaden harvest for this year at 158,700 metric tons. The Governor's action implements a 10 percent increase over last year's harvest level, an increase approved last month by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

"We need to have a strong and successful menhaden fishery," said the Governor, who delivered his remarks in the shadow of the landmark Reedville smokestack. These sentiments were echoed by the Coalition members who attended the event.

"This announcement is a much-needed boost for our regional menhaden fishery, which is only now getting the recognition it deserves for being responsibly and sustainably managed," said Kim Huskey, Executive Director of the Virginia Seafood Council. "We're delighted to have the Governor recognize that this fishery is fundamental to our cultural heritage, and that it plays an economically essential role in Virginia. We thank him for his support."

The Menhaden Fisheries Coalition – which represents over 90 percent of menhaden fishermen, related businesses, and supporting industries along the Atlantic Coast – has long advocated for the kind of responsible harvest increase promulgated by the Governor this morning. For the past two years, the fishery has suffered under excessively lowered harvest limits, the result of a deeply flawed and heavily [criticized 2012 stock assessment](#). An updated and improved menhaden assessment this year finally aligns menhaden science with what Coalition members

have been saying since before the harvest cuts went into place: menhaden are sustainably harvested and not overfished. [The ASMFC voted on and approved this year's new, higher levels of harvest as a result](#), a decision welcomed by the fishery.

"As members of Virginia's baitfish industry, we are pleased that the best available science supports our fishery as sustainable and responsible," said A.J. Erskine, of Bevans Oyster Co. and Cowart Seafood Corp. "It's reassuring to have the backing and support of both the Governor and the ASMFC."

Menhaden bait and reduction fisheries are some of the most economically important fisheries in Virginia. The reduction fishery is one of the country's most important suppliers of fish meal and fish oil, while the bait fishery is a critical supplier of bait for fisheries up and down the Atlantic Coast. Together, these fisheries help drive economic development in Virginia's Northern Neck and serve as some of the largest employers in the Reedville area.

The Menhaden Fisheries Coalition thanks Governor McAuliffe for his continued support of the menhaden fishery and Virginia's fishing communities, and will continue to advocate for scientifically supported and sustainable management of this vitally important fishery.

About the Menhaden Fisheries Coalition

The Menhaden Fisheries Coalition is a collective of menhaden fisherman, related businesses, and supporting industries. Comprised of over 30 businesses along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, the Menhaden Fisheries Coalition conducts media and public outreach on behalf of the menhaden industry to ensure that members of the public, media, and government are informed of important issues, events, and facts about the fishery.