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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 75

Offered January 11, 2012

Prefiled January 11, 2012

Requesting the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to study strategies for implementing new requirements under the amended Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. Report.

Patron—Northam

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Atlantic menhaden are a keystone species in the Chesapeake Bay and Western Atlantic Ocean ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, scientists have determined that overfishing of Atlantic menhaden has occurred in 32 of the past 54 years; and

WHEREAS, economically and culturally important commercial and recreational fisheries in Virginia depend on healthy Atlantic menhaden stocks; and

WHEREAS, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has instituted a fishing mortality threshold to maintain at least 15 percent of maximum spawning potential and a fishing mortality target of maintaining at least 30 percent of maximum spawning potential to increase Atlantic menhaden abundance, spawning stock biomass, and availability as a forage species; and

WHEREAS, the ASMFC is in the process of developing an amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden that will include requirements for states to meet the fishing mortality threshold; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission is charged with managing Virginia fisheries for the long-term good using the best available scientific, economic, biological, and sociological information available; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia Marine Resources Commission be requested to study and report on strategies for implementing new requirements under the amended Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden.

In conducting its study, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission shall (i) review all potential management measures that could be used to comply with new harvest restrictions on Atlantic menhaden, (ii) consider options for limiting the impact of new harvest restrictions on the bait fishery for Atlantic menhaden, and (iii) offer specific recommendations for implementing new requirements under the amended Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for this study, upon request.

The Virginia Marine Resources Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2012, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2013 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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