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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 572

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 2, 2017

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the most appropriate means of regulating the fishing of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Report.

Patrons—Knight, Austin, Davis, Helsel, Ingram, Robinson and Ware; Senators: Cosgrove, Lewis, Spruill and Wagner

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Atlantic menhaden is one of the most abundant species of finfish in estuarine and coastal Atlantic waters, and is a vital source of food for a wide variety of fish, seabirds, and marine mammals from Florida to the Gulf of Maine; and

WHEREAS, menhaden are the principal filter feeders of the Chesapeake Bay's waters, feeding on plankton and decaying plant matter, which improves the water quality of the Bay; and

WHEREAS, menhaden are sold as bait or are transformed into fish oil, pet food, fertilizer, and food additives at reduction plants; and

WHEREAS, menhaden is the only finfish that the Commonwealth regulates by statute rather than through the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, the agency that sets policies for dozens of other saltwater species; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the most appropriate means of regulating the fishing of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) shall determine the most appropriate means of regulating the fishing of menhaden in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to JLARC for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2018, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2019 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor 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 and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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