

20201184D

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 549

Offered September 24, 2020

*Commending the captain and crew of the Smuggler's Point fishing vessel.*Patron—Stuart

WHEREAS, on August 20, 2020, the captain and crew of *Smuggler's Point*, a menhaden fishing vessel that is owned by Ocean Harvesters and operates exclusively for Omega Protein Corporation, participated in an at-sea rescue of six people aboard a recreational boat that had caught fire near Ocean City, Maryland; and

WHEREAS, after a routine day of fishing, *Smuggler's Point* was returning to the Omega Protein Corporation facility in Reedville to unload its catch of Atlantic menhaden; and

WHEREAS, while steaming off the coast near Ocean City, Maryland, *Smuggler's Point* crewmembers received a mayday call over the radio from another nearby vessel, *No Filter*, that was in distress approximately one-half mile from their location; and

WHEREAS, Captain Robert Huff and the crew of *Smuggler's Point* immediately sprang into action, changing course and heading toward the coordinates broadcasted by *No Filter*; and

WHEREAS, *Smuggler's Point* was first to arrive on the scene, where the crew found *No Filter* on fire and six people in the water; the crew maneuvered its 170-foot vessel toward the distressed people and deployed lifesaving rescue equipment to bring them safely on board; and

WHEREAS, the captain and crew of *Smuggler's Point* remained in constant communication with the United States Coast Guard and maritime officials in Maryland throughout the rescue; and

WHEREAS, the individuals rescued by the *Smuggler's Point* crew were offered a warm space in the pilothouse, as well as water and masks, and waited with the crew until authorities arrived to take the rescued recreational fishermen safely back to shore; and

WHEREAS, the captain and crew of *Smuggler's Point* had been trained for this type of dangerous and life-threatening situation in numerous safety meetings conducted by Omega Protein Corporation, and had developed a detailed plan that they executed with extreme care and concern, following all safety protocols and exhibiting the highest degree of maritime professionalism; and

WHEREAS, the crewmembers of *Smuggler's Point* are longtime menhaden fishermen with decades of experience in the industry, including Captain Huff, who has been with the menhaden fishery since the late 1970s and a captain since 1985, and First Mate Roger Smith, also a captain, who has been with the fishery since 1988; and

WHEREAS, the crewmembers of *Smuggler's Point* are dedicated employees of Omega Protein Corporation, which is a nutritional product company that has developed, produced, and delivered healthy products throughout the world to improve the nutritional integrity of foods, dietary supplements, and animal feeds for more than 100 years; and

WHEREAS, Omega Protein Corporation is a division of Cooke, Inc., a family-owned fishery company based in New Brunswick, Canada, that also owns and operates Wanchese Fish Company in Suffolk; the company's mission is to help people lead healthier lives with better nutrition through sustainably sourced ingredients such as highly refined specialty oils, specialty proteins products, and nutraceuticals; and

WHEREAS, Omega Protein Corporation operates seven manufacturing facilities in the United States, Canada, and Europe and maintains a long-term supply contract with Ocean Harvesters, which owns 30 vessels, including *Smuggler's Point*, that harvest menhaden, a fish abundantly found in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Omega Protein Corporation is proud to include as a significant part of its workforce members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400, some of whom were aboard *Smuggler's Point* and played an integral role in the successful rescue of the recreational fishermen; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of Virginia, That the captain and crew of the *Smuggler's Point* fishing vessel hereby be commended for their selfless efforts to rescue distressed individuals aboard *No Filter* on August 20, 2020; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare copies of this resolution for presentation to the captain and crew of the *Smuggler's Point* fishing vessel and Omega Protein Corporation as an expression of the Senate of Virginia's admiration for the captain's and the crew's professionalism, bravery, and care and concern for their fellow mariners.