



PO Box 7114  
Wilton, CT 06897  
norwalkriver.org

November 27, 2019

Dear Soundkeeper Lucey,

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association and its more than 1500 participants and members to support the efforts of Save the Sound to protest the overfishing of menhaden by Omega Protein in Virginia. We demand action to enforce the Chesapeake Bay cap of 51,000 metric tons (MT) of fish allowed, as established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Many species, including menhaden, migrate through multiple state jurisdictions, so it is imperative that states are coordinated to ensure long term productivity of any given fishery. When states begin to operate independently, like Virginia has, interested parties can push for a harvest quota larger than the fishery can handle sustainably.

Our community is working hard to clean up and protect our rivers to ensure the health of Norwalk harbor and Long Island Sound. Many in this seven-town watershed depend on a healthy, resilient fish population in the Sound for food and jobs. The striped bass population we depend on is threatened by this over-fishing in Virginia. The striped bass nursery in the Chesapeake Bay is the largest on the Atlantic coast and contributes a significant portion of the bass that migrate through the Sound. The primary prey for Chesapeake striped bass is menhaden. Older bass—those that breed and build the population—are most dependent on menhaden. This nursery is now at risk because Canadian-owned Omega Protein willfully violated the fishing cap established by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, unilaterally declaring it will take over 30% more menhaden from the Chesapeake Bay than it is allowed.

We support action to stop this overfishing and protect our shared fisheries resources along the Atlantic coast.

Sincerely,

Louise Washer, President  
Norwalk River Watershed Association

Ridgefield, Wilton, Norwalk, Redding, Weston, New Canaan, Lewisboro