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House of Representatives

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS CONSERVATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1996

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4139) to reauthorize and amend the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act and the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4139

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act Amendments of 1996".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 7(a) of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note) is amended by striking "For each of fiscal years 1986," and all that follows through "1994," and inserting "For fiscal year 1997,".

SEC. 3. TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) COMMISSION MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERSTATE PLAN.—Section 4(a)(1) of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note) is amended in the material preceding subparagraph (A) by striking "of fiscal year 1987, and of each fiscal year thereafter," and inserting "of each fiscal year,".

(b) REPEAL OF INOPERATIVE PROVISIONS.—Sections 8 and 10 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note) are repealed.

SEC. 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PREPARATION OF PLANS AND AMENDMENTS TO PLANS FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note), as amended by section 3(b) of this Act, is further amended by adding after section 7 the following new section:

"SEC. 8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PREPARATION OF PLANS AND AMENDMENTS TO PLANS FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS.

"The Commission shall establish standards and procedures to ensure that the Commission provides an adequate opportunity for public participation in the preparation of

any plan for the management of Atlantic Striped Bass and any amendment to such a plan (including any amendment to the Interstate Fisheries Management Plan for Striped Bass, dated October 1, 1981), including public hearings and procedures for the submission of written comments to the Commission."

(b) DEADLINE.—Within 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission shall issue standards and procedures under section 8 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note), as amended by subsection (a) of this section.

SEC. 5. TRANSFER OF EXISTING PROVISION TO ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS CONSERVATION ACT.

Section 6 of the Act entitled "An Act to authorize appropriations to carry out the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act for fiscal years 1989 through 1991, and for other purposes" (approved November 3, 1988; Public Law 100-589; 102 Stat. 2986)—

(1) is amended by striking subsection (g);

(2) as so amended, is transferred from that Act to the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 note);

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WILLIAM M. THOMAS, *Chairman*.

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(3) shall appear immediately after section 8 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, as amended by section 4 of this Act; and

(4) is redesignated as section 9 of the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act.

SEC. 6. AMENDMENT AND EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION FOR ANADROMOUS FISH CONSERVATION ACT

(a) SCOPE OF STUDIES.—Section 7(a) of the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 757g(a)) is amended by striking “and” after the semicolon at the end of paragraph (2), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (3) and inserting “; and”, and by adding at the end following new paragraph:

“(4) the effects of water quality and other habitat changes on the recruitment, spawning potential, mortality rates, and population abundance of the Delaware River striped bass population.”

(b) EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION.—Section 7(d) of the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 757g(d)) is amended by striking “each of the fiscal years 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994” and inserting “fiscal year 1997”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] and the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, the Atlantic coast stock of striped bass are found in waters from North Carolina to Maine. They are highly migratory but move primarily along the coast within the 3-mile zone, which is subject to State fishery management.

While striped bass populations have fluctuated dramatically in the past, the population suffered a drastic decline in the 1970's. In fact, striped bass harvests dropped from 15 million pounds in 1973 to 3.5 million pounds in 1983.

In response to this serious problem, Congress approved an emergency striped bass study and the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act of 1984. This law requires all affected coastal States to implement management measures to conserve and protect the remaining stocks of Atlantic striped bass.

The resurgence of striped bass is a major fishery management success story. In fact, Maryland recently announced that a record-shattering number of young striped bass were found this year in the State's long-running annual striped bass survey. This survey is one of the most important barometers used to judge the health of the Atlantic coast striped bass stock. H.R. 4139 will ensure that this remarkable recovery continues.

This legislation will reauthorize both the Striped Bass Conservation Act and ongoing striped bass population studies. In addition, the bill focuses attention on stripers in the Delaware River and encourages greater public participation in the writing of management plans.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say also that we have done a lot of things on

the Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee, and, of course, previous to that we operated in the framework of the Merchant Marine Committee.

For the past 12 years, the years that I have been here, we have done a lot of things to try to conserve and protect and enhance fisheries populations, not only in the Atlantic Ocean, obviously, but in the Gulf and in the waters offshore of the west coast as well.

This effort, which, I must add, has been on a bipartisan basis, has been a real success story, and so early in 1995 we passed in this House a bill very similar to this to reauthorize the act for 1995 and 1996. The other body has failed to act.

This bill reauthorizes, therefore, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act with some very minor changes for the year 1997. We are hopeful that in the next 48 hours or so, the other body will see its way clear to take up this measure so that we can proceed to have an enhanced striped bass protection and enhancement effort ongoing in 1997.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the continuation of this vital and highly successful conservation effort by voting in favor of what I consider to be very important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill.

Twelve years ago striped bass stocks along the Atlantic coast had declined to very low levels as a result of overfishing and pollution. Fishermen and managers alike were concerned that this fishery would soon become an endangered species.

In an unprecedented move, Congress passed the Striped Bass Conservation Act designed to support State efforts to reverse this frightening trend. Today, the implementation of the Federal-State partnership embodied in the Striped Bass Act has restored the stripper to its former glory as one of the most important sport and commercial fisheries on the east coast. It is clear evidence that conservation can work.

The conservation management programs that have brought this fishery back from the crash of the 1980's must continue, and H.R. 4139 will ensure this is the case, and I enthusiastically urge Members to support it today.

I wanted to say I also am pleased that the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON], has included in the legislation public participation in preparation of plans and amendments to plans for Atlantic striped bass. This is something that the recreational fishermen along the Jersey coast have particularly been very concerned about, that there is sufficient public participation, and that provision is now in the bill.

In addition, if I could mention, I know today that since we need to move

this bill, and it is important we move it, we can certainly not bring up the issue of the game status of striped bass or the ban or moratorium on the sale of striped bass caught in the EEZ. But I want to mention that I know Mr. SAXTON and I would like to see a continued ban or moratorium on the sale in the EEZ. Both of us have legislation that will either accomplish that or make striped bass a game fish.

I am hopeful in the next Congress we can work toward these goals. But today I am pleased to see this legislation, this reauthorization, is coming to the floor. It is very important, and I would again urge support of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am told by my diligent staff that during my statement I said that we were reauthorizing for 1987, which is obviously only 10 years off and it is really 1997. I would also like to thank Mr. PALLONE for his cooperation here today. This was kind of a last minute thing that we decided to do for the reasons that I stated before, primarily because of its importance to the continuation of this extremely successful effort.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4139.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voting in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

ACCOUNTABLE PIPELINE SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1996

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1505) to reduce risk to public safety and the environment associated with pipeline transportation of natural gas and hazardous liquids, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows: