

April 11, 2022

To: Representative John-Paul Coussan

Chairman, Louisiana House Natural Resources and Environment Committee

Re: Louisiana, National and International Businesses Urge the Passage of HB 1033

Chairman Coussan and House Natural Resources and Environment Committee Members,

The Louisiana-based, national and international businesses signing this letter urge the Louisiana Legislature and Governor John Bel Edwards to approve and enact House Bill 1033 of the 2022 Regular Legislative Session by Representatives Orgeron, Fontenot, McKnight and Pierre to help conserve and protect the fisheries and vital coastal habitat from the effects of industrial menhaden (pogie) harvest along Louisiana's coast.

Our companies are partners with the recreational fishing community in Louisiana and throughout the Gulf of Mexico. We take pride in helping enable angling opportunities in Louisiana by supplying fishing tackle and boats, supporting fisheries habitat restoration and conservation and providing jobs for Louisiana's recreational fishing culture and economy.

NOAA Fisheries reports marine recreational fishing has an overall economic impact of more than \$1.15 billion annually in Louisiana and supports approximately 17,000 jobs. Louisiana has earned the title Sportsman's Paradise and supports unique, world-renowned opportunities to fish for iconic species such as redfish, yellowfin tuna, speckled trout, tarpon, cobia, red snapper and many others.

We believe these opportunities are diminished by the current management of industrial menhaden fishing in Louisiana waters and would be improved by enacting HB 1033.

Anglers, charter captains and guides, conservation organizations, coastal business owners and residents and many scientists have expressed concerns about the damage caused by large, industrial menhaden boats operating in shallow waters, the lack of an established catch limit for menhaden harvest and management that doesn't account for the needs of the fish that feed on menhaden. There is ample evidence of menhaden vessels disturbing water bottoms, impairing water quality and leaving redfish Louisiana's only saltwater gamefish, jacks, sharks and other sportfish as well as thousands of dead menhaden and other forage fish dead along beaches and coastal bays.

There is also evolving scientific evidence that shows redfish, jacks, sharks, speckled trout, tarpon and many other fish, birds and marine mammals depend on menhaden as part of their diets and that stocks of these fish may be reduced by current menhaden harvest.

We urge Louisiana lawmakers to take some sensible, conservation-minded steps towards protecting Louisiana's fisheries by passing and enacting HB 1033. We further encourage lawmakers to continue to work with anglers, conservation organizations and fisheries managers to develop ecologically-based management for menhaden that considers the needs of sportfish, birds and marine mammals.

Sincerely,

Louisiana Businesses:

Bill Lewis Lure Company/Rat-L-Trap

Four Horsemen Tackle

Cajun Lure Company

Matrix Shad

Cajun Outboards

Front to Back Boat Service

Moran's Marina

Cajun Made Fishing Charters

Cajun Fishing Adventures

Superior Bait and Tackle

Puglia's Sporting Goods

VersaMaxx Corks

National/International Businesses and Corporations:

Yamaha Motor Company

Shimano Fishing

Yeti Coolers

AFTCO

Pure Fishing: Abu Garcia, Penn, Berkley, Ugly Stick, Stren, Spiderwire, Shakespeare, Fenwick, Pflueger, Mitchell, Greys, JRC, Hardy, Chub, Hodgman, Sebile, Van Staal

Rather Outdoors: Lew's, Quantum, Zebco, Strike King, Salmo Fishing Lures, Preston Innovations, Matrix Fishing Products, Fox, Fox Rage

House of Outdoors: Googan Fishing Baits, Googan Squad, Lyn Fishing, Bass Mafia

Bonnier Corporation: Salt Water Sportsman Magazine, Marlin Magazine, Sport Fishing Magazine

St. Croix Rods

Simms Fishing Products

Eagle Claw Fishing Tackle

Rapala

Okuma Fishing Tackle

Captain Harry's Fishing Supply

Sportco Marketing Company

Maxima USA Fishing Line

Temple Fork Outfitters

Engel Coolers

National Professional Anglers Association

Bullet Weights