



April 13, 2026

The Honorable Philip DeVillier
Speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives
900 North 3rd Street
Baton Rouge, LA 70804

**Re: HB 757; increases penalties for commercial menhaden buffer zone violations.
HB 855; requires commercial menhaden vessels to fish in 22+ feet of water.
HB 872; AIS tracking on all commercial menhaden vessels.
HB 886; non-confidential commercial menhaden harvest data.**

Position: Support

Dear Speaker DeVillier and Honorable Members of the Louisiana House of Representatives,

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), we write in strong support of House Bills 757, 855, 872, and 886. Collectively, these bills represent a thoughtful and necessary approach to ensuring the long-term health, sustainability, and accountability of Louisiana's coastal fisheries — resources that are central to the state's economy, culture, and outdoor heritage.

Founded in 1989, CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. CSF has a strong track record in Louisiana, working with the Louisiana Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and conservation partners to protect and advance Louisiana's sporting heritage by supporting pro-sportsmen legislation and state fish and wildlife management objectives. We offer the following comments based on our experience working on fisheries policy for more than 30 years.

Gulf menhaden are a critical forage species that serves as the foundation of Louisiana's coastal ecosystem. Menhaden play an indispensable role in supporting the food web, providing essential nutrition for economically and ecologically important predator species such as redfish, speckled trout, flounder, and a wide array of birds and marine mammals. The health and abundance of these fisheries, and the communities and businesses that depend on them, are directly tied to the availability of menhaden.

Given this foundational role, it is essential that the menhaden resource is managed with a high degree of care, transparency, and accountability. Concerns regarding the scale and shoreline proximity of industrial purse seine operations, documented levels of incidental bycatch, and the broader ecological impacts of concentrated harvest effort underscore the need for the commonsense provisions included in these bills.

These bills do not seek to eliminate or unduly restrict the menhaden industry. Rather, they establish reasonable safeguards and accountability measures to ensure that harvest practices do not have unintended or deleterious impacts on Louisiana's delicate coastal ecosystems, coastal economies, or the citizens who depend on and cherish these resources. Improved industry accountability, reporting, monitoring, and spatial considerations will provide greater confidence that the fishery is being managed in a manner consistent with long-term sustainability.

Louisiana's designation as the "Sportsman's Paradise" reflects generations of stewardship and a deep connection between its people and the outdoors. Furthermore, each year, anglers from across the country are drawn to Louisiana's marshes and nearshore waters, contributing significantly to local economies and sustaining a way of life that is uniquely Louisianan. Protecting the forage base and nearshore habitats that underpin these experiences is essential to maintaining that legacy.

By advancing these bills, the Committee will reinforce Louisiana's commitment to science-based management, resource stewardship, and balanced use of its fisheries. These measures will help ensure that the benefits of healthy menhaden populations, reduced by-catch of critical sport fish species, and healthier coastlines are realized today and for future generations.

For these reasons, CSF respectfully urges your support of House Bills 757, 855, 872, and 886.

Thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide comments on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Lance". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mark Lance
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