

# ***News From NJ Senate Democrats***



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**SENATOR SMITH ON EFFORTS TO HELP STRIPED BASS FISHERMEN**

**TRENTON** - Senator Bob Smith, Chairman of the Senate Environment Committee, hailed a measure to bring New Jersey in line with federal size regulations for the fishing of striped bass, which was approved by the Senate Environment Committee and the full Senate today, and would allow the State to avoid a threatened federal ban on striper fishing in New Jersey.

"Fishing is a bipartisan recreation," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex. "Fishermen don't claim block party allegiance one way or another, so protecting the State's striper season wasn't a political victory for Democrats over Republicans, or vice versa. It was just something that we had to do, and I'm glad that the Senate could get together, both sides of the aisle, and get it done so that our fishermen can continue to enjoy their sport in our State's waters, and so that businesses that cater to recreational fishermen are not left in the lurch."

The bill, S-1691 (A-3007), will amend New Jersey's catch and possession standards for striped bass to comply with recent federal changes to the coastal striped bass management plan. The new size standards for striped bass fishing will require that fishermen can only take one fish which measures 24 to 28 inches long, and a second fish which is 34 inches or larger per day. Failure of the State to come into compliance with the federal standards would have resulted in a Statewide moratorium on striped bass fishing beginning Sept. 20, the same day as the original Senate hearings, but the State received an extension due to flooding at the Statehouse last weekend that prohibited the Senate from meeting.

"A federal ban on striped bass fishing would have been disastrous for many mom and pop tackle shops and other fishing-related businesses throughout the Garden State," said Senator Smith. "Estimates put the daily revenue to businesses serving recreational fishermen at a half million dollars a day. We couldn't allow small business owners to bear the brunt of the State's non-compliance, so we had to move quickly to help these entrepreneurs. I'm glad we did."

The bill was approved by the Assembly in June.

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