

**From:** bob ritchie  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Admitting gillnets into floating fishtrap sector  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 5, 2025 9:36:01 AM

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Cows and pigs are two totally different animals. They may live on the same barnyard, but that's where the similarities end. Gillnets and floating fishtraps are likewise totally different animals as well, and should not be lumped together in the same sector. I am against adding gillnets to the fishtrap sector.

**From:** Chelsea Fuchs  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support proposal 7  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 11, 2025 3:43:07 PM

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**Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7**

**We, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:**

**“The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the**

**striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).”**

**Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for**

**Rhode Island's historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated**

**responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode**

**Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state's local seafood economy.**

**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

**Chelsea Williams and Aaron Williams  
Charlestown, RI**

Sent from my iPhone

**Public hearing comments on Black Sea Bass from David and Charles Borden F/V Old Coot and Drake/ Sakonnet Point - cell, 401-451-9312- Submitted -11-14-2025**

**2026 Commercial Black Sea Bass Management Options:**

- **Support Proposal 1 (Industry/Noticed): Sub-period allocation changes.** Rational: This proposal shifts 3% of the quota from January–April to October 16 to December 31. Why: The Oct-Dec 31 period is 10 weeks long (two and a half times longer than the two prior periods) and requires additional quota to avoid a closure like the one that occurred in 2023.  
  
The January–April and October–December fisheries share many of the same participants and vessel types (in order of participation) trawlers, gill netters, lobster trap fishermen, fish potters, and rod-and-reel boats on Coxes and South). These are generally deep-water bycatch fisheries where releasing fish often results in mortality due to barotrauma, making quota utilization more biologically and ethically sound. This adjustment does not take quota away from other user groups, but rather shifts 3% of catch within the same constituency, to better match seasonal fishing patterns. Final point, in spite of this minor shift in quota during the spring period, the allocation for this period and group of vessels will still increase from the 2025 level, as will the weekly limit if proposal 5 below is approved (500-700 a week).
- **Support Proposal 2 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes.** (from 50 lbs. day to 100 day). The rational for support is that the quota is increasing by 31%, and there were no closures this year, meaning more fish are available to catch, which allows for the liberalization of existing regulations. This change will also standardize the daily possession limit at 100/ day for entire year.
- **Support Proposal 3 (Industry/Noticed): Possession limit changes.** This proposal should be considered in conjunction with Part 23 – Aggregate, proposal #5, to amend the Aggregate Program to be a single year-round

program (see comments below). As explained below, it is also a logical adjustment, even if not linked to the aggregate year-round programs.

**Part 23 – Aggregate Program (250-RICR-90-00-23): Summer/Fall Aggregate Program for Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass:**

- **Support Proposal 1: Amend weekly black sea bass limit from 6 to 7x the daily limit.** The rational for this support is that the quota is increasing by 31%, and there were no closures this year, meaning more fish are available to catch, which allows for the liberalization (6 to 7 days) of existing regulations. Additionally, going to seven days a week will prevent situations where a fisherman catches black sea bass on a closed day and has to discard the fish.
- **Opposed Proposal 2 (Industry): Amend title of part 23 to remove “aggregate” and change all instances of “aggregate” to “weekly or bi-weekly landing limit program”.** Rational: There was no compelling logic presented verbally at the hearing, or in writing, to adopt this alternative, and this change could add confusion if there are different weekly programs with different requirements.
- **Support Proposal 5 (Industry): Amend Part 23 - Aggregate Program to be a single year-round program.** Rational: In conjunction with the above recommendations, this change will raise the landing limit in the first period by 200 lbs. (500 to 700). This change will also standardize the daily limit at 100 a day year long.

Given that the quota is increasing by 31%, this change , in conjunction with the other proposals above, will likely convert some discards to landings by benefiting trawlers and offshore lobster fishermen during the winter period - January through April. Since discards during this period are deducted from subsequent commercial ABC, it will benefit all commercial users of the resource, by reducing the possibly of discarding BSB i. e. no closed days.



**From:** Dan  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for proposal 7  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 11, 2025 3:58:48 PM

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Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support  
Proposal 7

I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:

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Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for

Rhode Island's historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated

responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode

Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to

the state's local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Daniel Calitri. Seafood Unlimited Inc.

## **Support for Proposal Seven**

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council,

Our names are Dom and Devon Campanale. We're commercial fishermen from Point Judith. We've been lobstering for longer than we can remember and working the fish traps since we were kids.

Point Judith's fleet is getting smaller every year, and we're some of the few younger guys still in it. We know that the floating fish traps are a clean and effective fishery, and we're committed to it for the long haul. But if you start taking quota away, then what are we supposed to count on for the future? Stability and opportunity are what keep people in this industry. If things keep changing, more young fishermen are just going to walk away. Losing quota during the rebuilding period weakens a fishery that's already limited, and it takes chances away from the people who are trying to stick with it. Proposal Seven provides some needed consistency. The floating fish traps have been part of Rhode Island for a long time, and they should be part of its future.

Thank you,

Dom and Devon Campanale

**From:** dpesante  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Commercial Striped Bass Proposal comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 21, 2025 6:42:29 PM

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To Rhode Island, DEM, Fish and Wildlife, and Rhode Island fisheries management council

My name is Dean Pesante owner operator of the F/V Oceana based out of Point Judith RI.

I have been a full-time commercial fisherman since 1982.

I am writing to support proposal 6 for Commercial Striped bass management. I am supporting this proposal for two very important reasons. 1) **DISCRIMINATION** Right now Gill nets are the only gear type that cannot land striped bass. This is arbitrary and discriminatory.

2) **REGULATORY DISCARDS**. Because of the discrimination towards gillnets, we are forced to discard, striped bass. Many of which are already dead. Striped bass is an unavoidable by Catch in our targeted Fisheries of bluefish, Scup and dogfish.

Given the fact that striped bass is in a rebuilding stage, makes it that much more important that all these fish are being accounted for towards the quota.

Right now the way striped bass is being managed you are encouraging and promoting a directed fishery and ignoring an unavoidable by Catch in other Fisheries. This is not good management, and is not in the best interest of striped bass stocks.

Thank you. Dean Pesante. F/V Oceana

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad \[mail.onelink.me\]](#)

**From:** Daniel Sh  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Sunday, November 2, 2025 7:45:09 PM

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I, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:  
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Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for Rhode Island’s historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state’s local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Daniel Shames South Kingston / Mooresfield oyster farm employee.

**From:** ERIC LORENTZEN  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** menhaden comment  
**Date:** Saturday, November 8, 2025 4:08:58 PM

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i like both proposals that have been submitted. rhode island has taken a step to allow their fishermen to access bait, but the rules fall short of making it worth investing in the fishery. i think the council should hear out it local fishermen on relaxing the rules to make it feasible to pursue. it sounds like they want to use power blocks to make it easier to set haul in the net and be able catch fish when they show up rather than just in the spring. to do this with the restriction of 12,000 lbs a week i know it won't be overfished or put any stress on the management area.

## **Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Allocation**

Dear Members of the RI Marine Fisheries Council,

My name is Ian Campbell, and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I'm writing in strong support of Proposal 7, which states that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39% until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Our season begins in early spring and ends in fall, but it takes year-round effort to make it happen. As an owner/operator, I am responsible for repairing and maintaining multiple boats that are needed to set and haul fish traps. That's mechanical work, electrical work, carpentry, fiberglassing, and so on. I build and mend traps, which require off-season storage to protect them from damage. I weld anchors, make lead weights, paint buoys, and fix barrels. I splice and coil anchor lines, up and down lines, and build frames. I stack, trailer, and stack again all the parts and pieces in and out of Point Judith continually. I coordinate crew schedules in all weather conditions throughout the year. I must plan months in advance to string all this together into a cohesive unit so that we can go catch fish. I give myself completely to this company and to this fishery. I invest my time, my money, and my energy — and all of that depends on predictable access to our quota. Proposed reallocations of the quota create enormous uncertainty, which makes it difficult to continue sacrificing and giving myself totally to an industry that faces repeated undercutting of access to an established quota.

The work that goes into keeping this fishery operational reflects the same consistency and care that's needed in management decisions. A predictable quota allows that effort to mean something — without it, the planning and all the doing is ultimately a slow road to failure instead of progress or success.

Some argue that reallocating quotas to other sectors would create new opportunities or fill gaps they perceive as missing. In reality, such changes would undermine a centuries-old fishery that earned its allocation through the qualifying years. This kind of grab would ultimately provide minimal financial gain for those sectors while simultaneously depleting the fish trap quota and eroding a sustainable, proven fishery.

Stability in the striped bass allocation supports the overall planning and balance of our operation. Maintaining the 39% allocation throughout the rebuilding period — or until the stock has been declared rebuilt by the ASMFC — supports not only conservation, but also the continuation of a fishery built on responsibility and precision. It provides the predictability we need to plan responsibly and keep Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery alive for future generations.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ian Campbell

Commercial Fisherman and Floating Fish Trap Owner

To DEM and RIMFC,

I am writing in support of adding tautog to the current aggregate permit program. I believe the flexibility in fishing is vital for the fishing community, however I also recognize concerns from both fishermen and the State about the potential for increased catch rates if tautog is added without safeguards. There is no doubt that the aggregate program increases catch rates, and there is warranted concern that the tautog quota cannot withstand increased effort without significantly shortening seasons.

To address this, I am suggesting the following modifications to the aggregate program to incorporate tautog in a responsible manner that will have no effect on fishermen who chose not to be in the program:

- 1) Add tautog as an option for the aggregate program
- 2) Each eligible fishermen will be issued tautog tags in number not to exceed the average of the prior 2 years which they used
- 3) Fishermen enrolling in the program will be prohibited from obtaining more tags

Everything else would remain the same. Season closures, quota monitoring and current season lengths would remain the same as the number of fish harvested by participants in the program would not increase, and only have the possibility of decreasing.

It would also allow new fishermen to access the program after participating in the current "general category" for a short time. New people would not be blocked from participating.

Essentially, this will create a cap on the number of fish harvested by an individual. It is NOT an allocation, merely a upper limit on the number of fish they can harvest. This will prevent increased effort in the form of new entrants into the fishery because of the modified limits as well as prevent current fishermen from expanding their effort all while allowing the current fishermen to operate their business in the most efficient and streamlined manner at the levels they have done so in the past.

Thank you, Jeff Grant

**Subject: Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Quota**

**To: Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries and Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council**

**Dear Members of the Council and Division,**

I am writing in support of Proposal 7, which states that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39% until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Maintaining allocation stability during the rebuilding period is essential to the long-term health and continuity of Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery. The stability provided under Proposal 7 safeguards both current operations and the broader viability of the sector as a whole. There are fish trap businesses presently for sale, and the value of those enterprises is directly tied to the quota they hold. Reducing the allocation at this juncture would diminish that value and discourage potential new ownership or reinvestment in this historic and sustainable fishery.

If quota were to be removed now and these operations later acquired or reactivated, restoring that lost allocation would be extremely difficult, if not impossible. Once quota is redistributed, it rarely returns. Such instability not only undermines business value but also weakens confidence in the management system designed to support sustainable fisheries.

Implementing allocation changes while the stock is under active rebuilding would also complicate the interpretation of management outcomes. Stable, data-rich fisheries such as the floating fish traps provide valuable information that supports accurate assessments of rebuilding progress. Maintaining the current allocation until the stock has been declared rebuilt ensures that management decisions made thereafter are based on actual biological recovery rather than short-term shifts in access or effort.

Rebuilding a fish stock must include consideration of the fisheries that depend on it. If the floating fish trap sector loses ground now, there may be neither the infrastructure nor the experienced operators remaining to benefit from the recovery once it occurs. Proposal 7 provides the necessary continuity to ensure that biological rebuilding is matched by social and economic recovery.

Maintaining quota stability through the rebuilding period is both a practical and precautionary management decision. It preserves business value for existing permit holders, sustains opportunity for future participants, and ensures that the benefits of rebuilding can be realized by a functioning fishery when the time comes.

Thank you for considering this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jeff Grant



**From:** jmacari1  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#); [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2025 Proposed Regulations  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 1:38:05 PM

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As far as the proposed Striped Bass Regulations-

I am favor of Division proposal #4. I am AGAINST all other proposals pertaining to the 2025 commercial Striped Bass season.

To add another user group (Gill Nets) to a VERY LIMITED allocation that is in effect, IS A VERY POOR CHOICE.

As some of the Department is aware of, a couple of decades or so ago, striped bass were solely a rod and reel fishery (along with just the trap fishery); a commercial angler could make a decent amount of revenue during the summer on bass, along with other fish, such as fluke, sea bass, tautog, tuna, etc. That is not the case these days; the historical commercial rod and reel activity for striped (and other species), is slowly going by the wayside, PLEASE omit any other user group to participate in the striped bass fishery..

I am favor of proposal #2 for black sea bass.

I am in favor of maintaining the status quo, no changes to the tautog fishery/. I am against the proposal to include tautog in the aggregate program.

Summer flounder and Black Sea bass aggregate programs- Against any modification of these programs until a study measuring the negative impacts of those programs on non-participating fishermen has been completed.

Thank You-

Sincerely,  
Joe Macari

commercial rod and reel fisherman  
jmacari1@cox.net



**From:** Kenneth Booth  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Regulations - November 3, 2025, Public Hearing Comments  
**Date:** Wednesday, November 12, 2025 11:05:34 AM

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The Rhode Island Commercial Rod & Reel Association submits the following comments on the items presented at the November 3rd hearing:

**Striped Bass** - RICRRA is in favor of Division Proposal 4. We believe this option allows all fishers an equitable time frame for fishing effort. The two day per week fishing should also provide the Department the ability to closely monitor quota compliance.

- RICRRA is against all other proposals related to the commercial striped bass fishery.

**Tautog**- RICRRA is in favor of status quo, maintaining 2025 regulations in regard to commercial tautog management. The limited annual quota is equitably distributed among the subperiods allowing all fishermen the opportunity to harvest during the year.

- RICRRA objects to the proposal to include this specie in the aggregate program. This proposal would favor some specific gear types and provide greater opportunity for non-compliant fishermen to manipulate catch limits.

**Black Sea Bass** - RICRRA is in favor of proposal 2.

**Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Aggregate Programs** - RICRRA objects to any modifications to these programs until completion of a comprehensive study of the program's negative impacts on non-participating fishermen.

Ken Booth, President  
RICRRA

**From:** Katherine Goss  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support  
**Date:** Sunday, November 16, 2025 12:49:08 PM

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Proposal 7

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Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to

the state’s local seafood economy.

I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Liam Sullivan  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#); [Lengyel, Nicole \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed Rule Making  
**Date:** Thursday, October 30, 2025 9:10:56 AM

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Peter,

I am writing this email to propose a change to the proposed language regarding the eligibility for the Striped Bass Gillnet Harvest Permit. In Finfish Section 3.8.2(C)5(a)2, I would like the language to state "Must demonstrate at least thirty thousand (30,000) pounds of cumulative landings of any marine species harvested in the three (3) preceding calendar years, and/or 10 or more state water gillnet landings".

Rational:

It is my interpretation of the current proposed language to minimize the eligible participants to gillnet fishermen that fish full time or make a significant portion of their income for the year from fishing. This current proposed language would make boats that meet the landings requirement through federal landings whose owners have a state water gillnet endorsement eligible. While I agree they should be eligible, this language would not qualify someone with a state water gillnet endorsement that does not have enough landings in 3 years but has actively gillnetted in state waters. I do not believe this to be fair.

I believe the language I am proposing will keep the eligibility pool to a minimum while also fairly encompassing all fishermen deserving of qualifying for the permit. If you have any questions or would like me to go further into my thought process, please feel free to reach out.

Thank you,  
Liam Sullivan  
(401) 418-2100

**From:** micheal mcelroy  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** DEM  
**Date:** Thursday, November 13, 2025 11:33:35 PM

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Hi Peter

this is getting silly , these people don,t care about any fishery . its all about the money

striper opening date ..... it left the bay along time ago , giving us a chance at the fish , so June 1 opening

Gill nets , im against any proposal in favor of gill nets , IMO they should be 100% banned /but again the money

they should be banned for everyone , evan the guys that only use them for bait ...they catch more then bait

Mike McElroy MP 0000000082

Have & enjoy your holidays ><>

**From:** Max N  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Sunday, November 2, 2025 3:24:46 PM

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I urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Maximus Namba South Kingston / Mooresfield oyster farm employee.

**From:** Mark Sherer  
**To:** [Olszewski, Scott \(DEM\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Mark Sherer](#); [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** 2025 Comm Gen Cat STB  
**Date:** Friday, November 14, 2025 9:19:38 AM

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Scott:

I am in favor of Division proposal #4, 5 fish Tuesday, Wednesday. I am not in favor of any of the other proposals, especially any quota allotted to the gill net industry.

Captain Mark Sherer  
Gannet Outdoor Adventures



**From:** Mark Starr  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps  
**Date:** Monday, November 3, 2025 3:54:48 PM

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## **Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7**

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I am writing to you in support of Proposal #7 as seen above in support of keeping the current striped bass allocation as is during this period of rebuilding. I feel it is the wrong time to change the parameters of the allocation while waiting to see how current regulations are working. It seems prudent in my eyes to wait until the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt before adding additional pressures mid-stream. Thank you very much for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Markham Starr

# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Name (print)

Town / Affiliation

Signature

Domenic Campanale

Narragansett  
Comm. Fishermen



Raymond Morrocco

Narragansett  
Comm. Fisherman

 RAYMOND MORROCCO

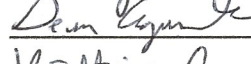
Kathryn Campanale

Narragansett  
NARRAGANSETT



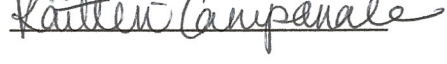
Devon Campanale

Comm. Fisherman



Kaitlin Campanale

Narragansett



# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Bradley Tefft	Ashaway	Bradley Tefft
Annalise Tefft	Ashaway	Annalise Tefft
John Nyblum	Peacedale	John Nyblum
Steve Bugbee	W. Kingston	Steve Bugbee
Ken Steere Bugbee	West Kingston	Ken Steere Bugbee
Paul J. Carr Jr	Narragansett RI	Paul J. Carr Jr
Kyle Dawson	South Kingstown	Kyle Dawson
Glenon Goodwin	South Kingstown	Glenon Goodwin
Robert Mitchell	Narragansett	Robert Mitchell
Tom LaFazia	NARRAGANSETT BAY LOBSTER	TOM LAFAZIA
Adam Morse	Narragansett Bay Lobsters	Adam Morse
John Nyblum	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	John Nyblum







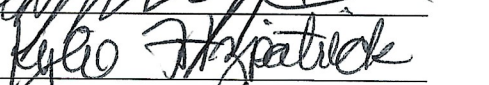


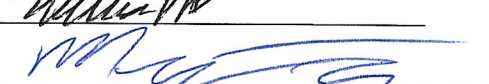
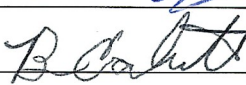


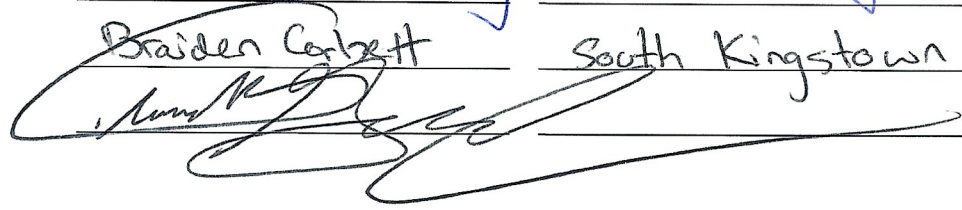
# Support Rhode Island's Historic Floating Fish Traps — Support Proposal 7

We, the undersigned, support Proposal 7, which states:

"The floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change, and will remain 39%, until the striped bass rebuilding period has ended, and the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC)."

Proposal 7 offers a fair and measured approach to fisheries management, providing needed stability for Rhode Island's historic floating fish trap fishery — a sustainable, low-impact practice that has operated responsibly for generations. By maintaining the current allocation through the rebuilding period, Rhode Island supports both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the continued contribution of this fishery to the state's local seafood economy.

**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
John Tally	Narragansett	
Mike Acampora	South Kingstown	
Sean Tally	Clinton	
KENNY FITZPATRICK	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	
Steve Fitzpatrick	S.K.	
Kyle Fitzpatrick	South Kingstown	
Anna Fox	S.K.	
Lindsay McDonald	Narragansett	
WILLIAM NELSON	S.K.	
Matthew Tanksley	South Kingstown	
Braiden Corbett	South Kingstown	
		

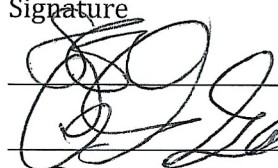

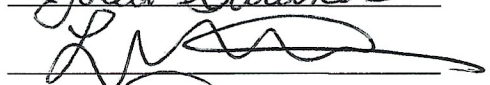



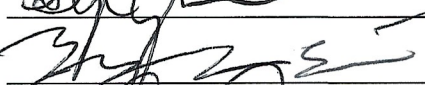




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Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Selena Gordon	S. Kingston	
Candace Gardner	W. Kingston	
Jared Gardner	W. Kingston	Jared Gardner
Lauren Cindrich	W. Kingston	
Ivan Cindrich	W. Kingston	
Mackenzie <del>Wright</del>	Westerly	
Steve Graham	Exeter	
ZACHARY DIER	WEST GREENSWICH	
Audrey Murphy	Ashaway	
Tyler Tuckon	W. Kingston	
Will J Doak	W. Kingston	
Catherine Tuckon	W. Kingston	






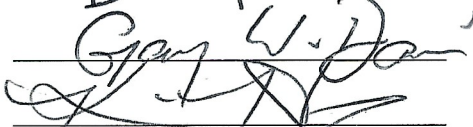

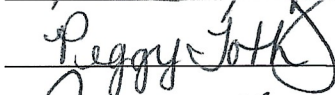
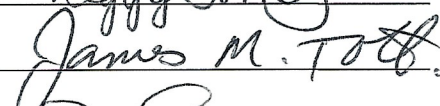
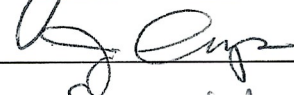
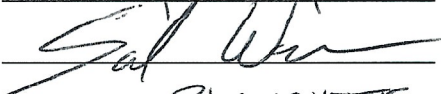


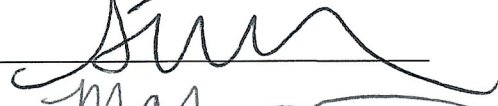
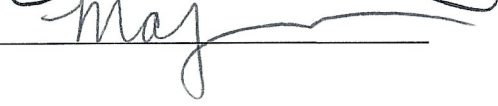
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Luc C Rathbone	Charlestown	
Ian Perz	Wakefield	
Brian Follett	Wakefield	
GARY DAVIS	S. KINGSTOWN	
Kerri Handrigan	Narragansett	
Peggy Toth	Charlestown	
James M. Toth	Charlestown	
Jimmy Champion	S. Kingstown	
	S. Kingstown	
DAVID BLANCHETTE	S. KINGSTOWN	
Shelby Sylvia	Wakefield	
matt frediani	Wakefield	

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We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
JOANIE CAMPBELL	South Kingstown R.I.	Joanie R. Campbell
Zach Nyblom	South Kingstown	Zach Nyblom
DOUG MELIROS	EXETER	Doug Meliros
Rick Gardner	South Kingstown	Rick Gardner
Ryan Horan	South Kingstown	Ryan Horan
Darlene Gardner	South Kingstown	Darlene Gardner
Marcia Tefft	Ashaway	Marcia Tefft
MATTHEW FISH	NARRAGANSETT	Matthew Fish
Christopher Fish	Narragansett/Bonnet Shores	Chris Fish
ERNEST GEORGE JR.	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Ernest D. George Jr.
Brandon Kelly	South Kingstown	Brandon Kelly
Rachel Partney	South Kingstown	Rachel Partney
Asmuy Kaiser	North Kingstown	Asmuy Kaiser



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Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
monica Galasso	Narragansett	M Galasso
lily gartner	narragansett	lily gartner
Tony D'Alessandro	Warwick	Tony D'Alessandro
Allison Reynolds	Warwick	Allison Reynolds
Amey Collier	Charlestown	Amey Collier
Jess Ward	Waterly	Jess Ward
Julia Kissinger	Ashaway	Julia Kissinger
Madalynn Sands	Wakefield	Madalynn Sands
Justin Fritze	Pawtucket	Justin Fritze
Max Gales	Wakefield	Max Gales
Matthew Hyman	West Warwick	Matthew Hyman
Jenny Graham	North Kingstown	Jenny Graham



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Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
Liam Hamilton	Westerly	[Signature]
Josh Brewster	West Warwick	[Signature]
George McAniff	South Kingstown	[Signature]
Victoria Almonte	South Kingstown	[Signature]
Kathleen [unclear]	Narragansett	[Signature]
Jared Morris	Narragansett	[Signature]
ROLAND BENJAMIN	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	[Signature]
SEAN O'DONNELL	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	[Signature]
Timothy Fanning	Narragansett	[Signature]
Timothy Busby	Narragansett	[Signature]
Jennifer Busby	Narragansett	[Signature]
ERIK ELLIS	South Kingstown	[Signature]

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We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
CHRISTINE A. SYKES	South Kingstown	Christine A. Sykes
Robert W. Sykes	South Kingstown	Robert W. Sykes
KEVIN W. JONES	NARRA.	Kevin W. Jones
WALTER DAVIS	NARRA.	Walter Davis
Kent Browning	South Kingstown	Kent Browning
BOB TUCKER	SOUTH KINGSTOWN	Bob Tucker
CARL GRANQUIST	NARRAGANSETT	Carl Granquist
Nancy Steinmeyer	South Kingstown	Nancy Steinmeyer
Steven A. Sisson	Wakefield R.I.	Steven A. Sisson
Susan Carew	Wakefield R.I.	Susan Carew
Glenn Westcott	Narragansett, R.I.	Glenn Westcott
JAMES SYKES	Narragansett	James Sykes

**From:** Stesha Campbell  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Support for Proposal 7  
**Date:** Sunday, November 16, 2025 1:32:00 PM

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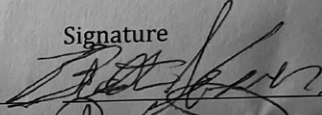
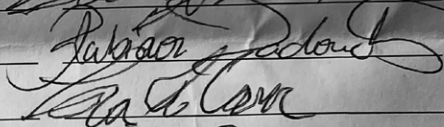
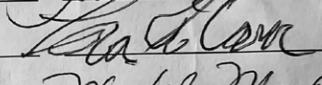
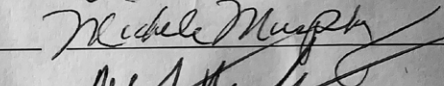
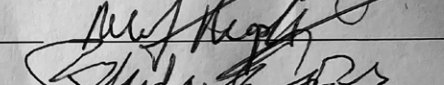
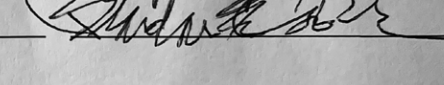
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**We urge the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council to adopt Proposal 7.**

Name (print)	Town / Affiliation	Signature
BETTY CARR	South Kingston	
RABIAA MADDOUCHA	Narragansett	
Lori A. Carr	South Kingston	
Michele Murphy	NARRAGANSETT	
Michael Murphy	NARRAGANSETT	
Brandon Carr	Narragansett	

On Sunday, November 16, 2025, 12:29 PM, Stesha Campbell <stesha\_campbell@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi Peter,

I have attached the signatures below in support of Proposal 7. Hopefully, this is a little easier than postcards.

Thank you.

Best,  
Stesha



**RHODE ISLAND**  
**SALTWATER**  
**ANGLERS**  
**Association**



P.O. Box 1467, Coventry, Rhode Island 02816

401-826-2121

[www.RISAA.org](http://www.RISAA.org)

Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, RI 02835

Via email: [peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

RE: Comments on Proposed Rulemaking Public Hearing 11-3-25

Mr. Duhamel:

Please accept the following comments on RIDEM Proposed Rulemaking, made on behalf of the entire membership of the Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association. Our members and all participants in the recreational fishery in RI rely on healthy fish stocks. We believe that the comments below are made in a light that will help protect both forage fish and those species that our industry needs to survive.

1. Commercial Menhaden Management – RISAA opposes both Proposal 1 and 2. We are opposed to additional commercial harvest of menhaden in the Menhaden Management Area when that area has not been opened due to observed high biomass. This entire idea of opening the area before the floor biomass has been observed works counter to the policies established by RIDEM when the MMA was created more than 10 years ago. RISAA has already received calls and complaints regarding commercial harvest in the MMA under the recent opening to 6000 pounds per vessel per week. Additional harvest and additional days open will only bring us back to the days when there was extreme conflict between commercial menhaden harvesters and rod and reel fishermen in the Bay. Please do not liberalize this commercial catch.
2. Commercial Striped Bass – Regarding Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4 - RISAA is not opposed to some measure to spread out commercial harvest over a longer time and therefore effort to a longer timeframe. We have no opinion if a lower bag limit or less open days is the best method to accomplish this objective. RISAA opposes Proposals 5 and 6. We have stated many times in the past, expanding commercial harvest to gill net fishing is not in the best interest of the species. We believe that the prohibition on gill net fishing for striped bass should remain. This proposed rule would allow gill net fishermen to harvest smaller striped bass than either commercial or recreational fishermen are currently allowed. It is extreme and would do tremendous damage to the striped bass population at a time when rebuilding is required and the striped bass technical committee has stated that there is a less than 50% probability of rebuilding of the stock by 2029 as required by law. Passage of this proposed rule would be reckless mismanagement of a critical marine resource. RISAA supports Proposal 7 to prohibit transfer of quota from the FFT sector to the general commercial sector because it could reduce the total commercial catch, thereby improving the possibility of rebuilding the stock by 2029.
3. Part 23 Aggregate Program – In general RISAA opposes the aggregate program such as in Proposal 1 because it encourages larger vessels to participate in the commercial harvest. In addition, it would seem that allowing a harvester to catch a week's worth of landings in one or two days advantages those vessels since they likely would not get 7 days of good weather and would have other reasons for not being able to fish every day of the week, therefore it makes no sense to establish the aggregate landings in any case to be the sum of the individual daily limits. At a minimum the aggregate should be reduced by 20% or 25% from the sum of the daily limits. Regarding Proposal 2, RISAA sees no reason to change the language in regulation. The term Aggregate has been used in RI regulations for many years and does not need to change just because someone perceives that the word has negative connotations. RISAA is opposed to Proposal 5. There is no reason to make the Aggregate Program year-round. When it was first established, the Aggregate program was for the Winter period only. This program made sense because it allowed fewer trips for a vessel during hazardous winter weather and saved significant fuel with long runs to the Winter fishing grounds. This program has now been expanded to Summer fishing to benefit large commercial vessels at the request of these vessels. RISAA opposes this continuing expansion into the Summer fishing period because it is bringing more draggers and gill net harvesters into the commercial fishery for those species that are

important to recreational fishing interests. These fishing methods are inherently wasteful of our precious marine resources and should not be given special treatment.

Thank you for consideration of these comments. Please feel free to contact either person signing below to discuss further.

Sincerely,

*Scott A. Travers*

Scott Travers  
Executive Director  
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association  
401-826-2121  
Travers@risaa.org

*Rich Hittinger*

Rich Hittinger  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association  
401-265-7602  
Hittinger@risaa.org

## Opposition to Proposal 6

I am writing to express strong opposition to Proposal 6, which would reduce the Floating Fish Trap (FFT) allocation from 39% to 27% and create a brand-new gill net striped bass fishery with a separate allocation, permit, season, and possession structure. Proposal 6 is the most destabilizing and biologically risky action under consideration this year. It increases effort, expands mortality, undermines stock rebuilding, harms product quality, and creates a major new enforcement and management burden—all during the striped bass rebuilding timeline through 2029.

**1. “Other gears can catch them, why can’t we?” is not a management justification.** Supporters of Proposal 6 argued that rod-and-reel fishermen, spearfishermen, and floating fish traps are allowed to land striped bass, and therefore gill netters should be as well. But fisheries are not—and cannot be—managed according to whether every gear type gets to catch every species.

Gear-specific rules exist for good reason: biological protection, stock rebuilding needs, discard mitigation, product quality, safety, and effort control. The longstanding gill net prohibition for striped bass is intentional, appropriate, and protective—not an oversight. Management should be based on sustainability, not parity.

**2. “We’re catching them anyway as bycatch” highlights a problem—not a reason to authorize more harvest.** At the public meeting, supporters of Proposal 6 claimed striped bass should be legalized for gill nets because they are already being caught incidentally. This is the opposite of a valid rationale. If meaningful bycatch is occurring, the appropriate response is to

- investigate,
- quantify,
- and mitigate

- not expand the fishery to make the bycatch legal. Bycatch is not a loophole for new entitlement. Furthermore, gill net interactions with striped bass result in high mortality due to entanglement, drowning, prolonged soak times, and gear mechanics that are fundamentally incompatible with low-mortality handling. This mortality rate is significantly higher than that of floating fish traps and rod-and-reel fisheries. If gill net bycatch of striped bass is occurring at meaningful levels today, the correct management response is to reduce soak times, modify gear, adjust seasons, or develop bycatch-mitigation measures—not to legalize and expand retention. Converting high-mortality bycatch into authorized harvest does not reduce striped bass deaths; it increases them. During a rebuilding period, regulating bycatch should mean tightening restrictions, not opening new access. Proposal 6 would expand the very gear type with the highest striped bass mortality at the moment when mortality should be minimized.

**3. Proposal 6 will reactivate dormant gill net permits and sharply increase effort.** While only a small number of gill netters fish regularly today, there are approximately 100–150 gill net permits in Rhode Island, and an estimated 70–75 of those permit holders would be immediately eligible to participate in the new striped bass gill net program under Proposal 6.

Proposal 6 offers new quota, new opportunity, and a high-value species—all of which create a strong incentive for currently inactive permit holders to re-enter the fishery, and for additional permit holders to work toward eligibility in future years.



Even a modest reactivation rate would:

- Increase fishing pressure
- Increase striped bass mortality
- Increase enforcement needs
- Destabilize existing sectors
- Undermine rebuilding

No evidence has been presented to justify expanding effort in a rebuilding stock.

**4. The 20% mixed-weight rule is biologically unsound and creates unavoidable waste.** Proposal 6 would allow gill netters to land unlimited striped bass as long as bass comprise  $\leq 20\%$  of the total mixed catch weight.

Gill nets frequently catch single-species hauls, especially during striped bass pulses. Under this rule, a gill netter who catches mostly or exclusively striped bass in a set:

- cannot legally land those fish, and
- would be forced to discard them dead.

This creates a regulatory structure that guarantees discard mortality—an unacceptable outcome for a species under a rebuilding mandate. No other striped bass rule in Rhode Island requires fishermen to throw away dead fish they legally cannot land. Proposal 6 would create exactly that problem.

**5. Gill-net-caught striped bass are significantly lower quality and damage Rhode Island's product reputation.** Quality is part of sustainability and part of economic viability.

- FFT fish are bled immediately while still moving and iced within seconds.
- Rod-and-reel fish are handled individually and kept iced.

In contrast: Gill-net-caught striped bass routinely exhibit gill-net ring bruising, soft flesh, and degradation from drowning and prolonged net soak times.

- Fish are often landed with little or no ice, packed into totes.
- Restaurants have, and will, reject poor-quality fish.
- Introducing a large volume of lower-quality product harms:
- Rhode Island's market reputation
- Dealer relationships
- Pricing stability
- Consumer confidence

Rhode Island currently lands a premium striped bass product. Proposal 6 jeopardizes that.

**6. Proposal 6 imposes a major new enforcement and administrative burden on DEM.** This proposal requires DEM and Marine Fisheries enforcement to build, manage, and monitor an entirely new fishery—with new permits, new rules, new reporting requirements, new compliance checks, and new risks.

DEM would now have to:

- Issue and track a new Striped Bass Gill Net Harvest Permit
- Verify permit eligibility (including a 30,000-lb landing requirement)
- Enforce a complex 20% mixed-weight rule requiring on-site weight checks
- Monitor a new 12% gill net striped bass allocation
- Track gill net striped bass separately from the General Category and FFT's

- Police discard problems created by unavoidable single-species hauls
- Manage quota, reporting, and enforcement across multiple new moving parts

This is a heavy administrative burden with no conservation benefit. During stock rebuilding, regulatory complexity should decrease—not multiply.

## **7. The economics do not justify the risk or the regulatory complexity.**

Rhode Island's total commercial striped bass quota is 138,467 pounds. Under Proposal 6, gill nets would receive 12% of the total, which equals approximately 16,616 pounds.

With an estimated 70–75 gill net permit holders immediately eligible to participate—and strong incentive for more of the roughly 100–150 permit holders statewide to become eligible—the per-vessel share quickly becomes negligible. If 70–75 gill netters participate, they would each be competing for only about 220–240 pounds per vessel per year. If participation grows toward the full 100–150 permit universe, that per-vessel share drops to roughly 110–165 pounds per year.

This is not a meaningful, stable economic opportunity for participants. It is a thinly spread allocation that will either concentrate in a small number of hands or leave most participants with almost nothing, while still requiring the Division to create and police an entirely new sector.

In contrast, the FFT fishery would lose approximately 16,600 pounds, dropping from ~54,000 pounds to ~37,000 pounds — a major, permanent reduction to an existing, highly selective, low-impact, heritage fishery.

The economics simply do not justify creating a new sector, reallocating quota away from an existing sustainable gear type, and adding significant administrative burden to the Division.

## **8. Proposal 6 undermines stability during the ASMFC-mandated rebuilding period through 2029.**

The striped bass stock is under a formal rebuilding timeline. During rebuilding:

- Effort should not expand
- New gear sectors should not be added
- Mortality should not increase
- Stability should be prioritized

Proposal 6 contradicts the goals of the rebuilding plan and introduces a high-risk, low-benefit fishery expansion at the worst possible time.

**Conclusion:** Proposal 6 increases mortality, increases effort, increases waste, decreases product quality, reactivates dormant permits, burdens DEM with new administrative and enforcement work, and destabilizes Rhode Island's most selective, lowest-impact source of commercial striped bass.

It provides no demonstrated biological, economic, or management benefit.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Division and the Council to reject Proposal 6 in its entirety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
 Stesha Campbell  
 Commercial fisherman and Floating Fish Trap Operator

## Subject: **Support for Proposal 7 – Maintain Floating Fish Trap Allocation**

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council and Division of Marine Fisheries,

My name is **Stesha Campbell**, and my brother and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I'm writing in **strong support of Proposal 7**, which ensures that the floating fish trap allocation will not be subject to change and will remain at 39 percent through the end of the rebuilding period, or until the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) declares the striped bass stock rebuilt.

For us, this is not just a policy matter — it's our livelihood, our history, and our future. Running a floating fish trap business is a **year-round commitment**. It's not just hauling fish for a few months — it's repairing boats in the winter, welding anchors in March, building frames and mending traps in April, and breaking it all down again in the fall.

It's mechanical work, electrical work, carpentry, planning, and coordination. It's also being a bookkeeper — filing SAFIS reports, keeping insurance and licenses current, and making sure berthing is paid. It's showing up at meetings, time and time again, to defend the work you do and the right to keep doing it. **Every part of that depends on predictability — knowing that the effort we put in year-round, through every season, will still mean something tomorrow.** Stability in quota isn't about profit or preference; it's about survival.

The fish traps have operated responsibly for generations because they work. They're efficient, selective, and inherently sustainable. Our traps have a discard mortality rate of less than three percent — fish that aren't kept are released alive and unharmed. There's no drag on the ocean floor, near-zero bycatch, and a minimal carbon footprint. This gear is passive, fixed, and fully accountable — exactly the kind of operation that **supports the state's conservation and rebuilding goals**.

**By contrast, the proposal seeking to shift striped bass quota into the gillnet fishery** would move this resource into a far less predictable and much higher-mortality gear type. Gillnets would result in exponentially greater discard mortality, far less predictable catch rates, and present new challenges for enforcement and monitoring. Never mind **igniting a resting fleet of gillnet permits**. During a rebuilding period, those risks are not theoretical — they **directly undermine recovery**.

Maintaining the current allocation is not just about fairness between sectors; it's about protecting the integrity of striped bass management and ensuring that Rhode Island's most selective, low-impact fishery remains part of the solution — not part of the problem. **Proposal 7 doesn't request more access or new opportunities; it seeks consistency — to maintain what already works.** Changing allocations now, while the stock is recovering, would destabilize a fishery that has proven itself reliable and sustainable.

**There are fish trap businesses currently for sale, and their value is directly tied to the quota they hold. If the quota is reduced, those operations lose value, and future investment becomes far less likely.** Once the quota is redistributed, it rarely returns. That kind of loss doesn't just hurt one company — it weakens an entire gear type. It jeopardizes the continuity of a whole fishery that has contributed to Rhode Island's economy and identity for over two centuries.

**The floating fish traps are one of the oldest continuously operating fisheries in the United States.** Historical records trace it back to the early 1800s. For generations, Rhode Islanders have built their lives around these traps — people who hauled the gear by hand, who built and repaired every piece themselves, and who passed their knowledge on to the next generation. Today, that same tradition continues.

**The fish traps in Point Judith aren't just our traps — they're the community's.** Each spring, people come up to us and say they've seen the ospreys back, because they know their arrival means it's time to set the traps again. Fishermen stop to tell us what they've been seeing offshore — schools of this or that, signs of what might be on the way.

As we load anchors and frames into the boats, every passerby wants to know what's already been set. Almost every commercial fisherman in the Point has a story about when they worked the traps for a season or two — a kind of rite of passage that ties generations together. And there's always the prior trap captain who'll tell you how they used to do it.

When we're mending along the escape road, people slow down to take pictures or stop and ask questions — sometimes fishermen will offer a hand, or at least a story, to help us pass the time. **We're not just another boat at the dock; we're something the community feels invested in and connected to — a part of the harbor that belongs to everyone.**

**That sense of shared pride and belonging is what's kept this fishery alive through generations. It's not something that can be rebuilt once it's lost — which is why it deserves protection, not risk.** Reducing the allocation now would undercut one of the few fisheries still meeting modern management ideals — low impact, high accountability, and sustainability.

At a time when the entire commercial fleet is shrinking altogether and aging out, **Proposal 7 helps preserve opportunity for those still here** — and for the younger fishermen working hard to make this their future. It **provides a reason to stay invested in the fishery** that's been part of Rhode Island for over two hundred years.

**Proposal 7 is fair, measured, and fully aligned with the goals of striped bass recovery.** It supports biological rebuilding while ensuring that a proven, responsible fishery remains part of Rhode Island's working coast when the stock rebounds.

On behalf of the floating fish trap sector, our families, our crews, and the many people who have signed in support of Proposal 7, I **respectfully urge you to adopt it — maintain the current allocation,** protect the fishery that's doing things right, and allow Rhode Island's floating fish traps to continue contributing to both the recovery of the striped bass stock and the long-term strength of this state's fishing heritage.

Sincerely,  
**Stesha Campbell**

Floating Fish Trap Operator  
Point Judith, Rhode Island

## **SUPPORT PROPOSAL SEVEN – Maintain the allocation**

Dear Members of the Council and Division,

My name is Stesha Campbell, and my brother and I own and operate the floating fish traps in Point Judith. I am writing in strong support of Proposal 7, which would maintain the current 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap (FFT) sector, through the end of the rebuilding period or until the striped bass stock has been declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Floating fish traps are not just another commercial gear; they are a management tool that directly supports Rhode Island's conservation and rebuilding objectives. As a fixed, passive gear type, our traps have a discard mortality rate of less than 3 percent. Non-target or undersized fish are released alive and unharmed, which directly contributes to the recovery of the striped bass stock. Our landings are easily monitored and fully traceable, providing managers with reliable data and ensuring compliance with quota limits. The state's provision, which allows the floating fish trap sector to roll over unharvested quota into the general category, has played a crucial role in maintaining the allocation system. This measure has helped prevent overage and preserve the integrity of both sectors.

This fishery embodies the principles of responsible, ecosystem-based management: no seabed disturbance, near-zero bycatch, and a small carbon footprint. These qualities make the floating fish trap one of the most selective and environmentally compatible commercial gears in use today. Maintaining stability in the floating fish trap sector allows Rhode Island to continue benefiting from one of the most sustainable and transparent commercial fisheries in the region.

Proposals to reallocate floating fish trap quota to commercial gillnets may appear to some to expand opportunity in the industry as a whole, but they should be viewed with eyes wide open. If you wanted to find the exact antithesis of a floating fish trap, you'd find it in a gillnet. This reckless gear type poses significant biological and management risks. It produces exponentially higher discard mortality, far less predictable catch rates, and creates new enforcement challenges. You don't want gillnets catching striped bass in their best years, never mind during a rebuilding period. Preserving the existing allocation and rejecting all gillnet proposals seeking striped bass quota is the responsible decision for the current and future health of the stock.

Proposal seven supports Rhode Island's broader fisheries management goals. It provides stability for our small business and ensures that the floating fish traps continue to play an active role in striped bass recovery. It also keeps this fishery focused on low-impact harvest methods and prevents striped bass from being shifted into high-mortality gillnet fisheries. We are proud to represent a fishery that reflects Rhode Island's commitment to sustainability and stewardship, and we remain dedicated to operating responsibly for the long-term health of this resource.

Sincerely,  
Stesha Campbell

**From:** Stesha Campbell  
**To:** [Duhamel, Peter \(DEM\)](#)  
**Subject:** Striped Bass Public Comment  
**Date:** Friday, November 14, 2025 2:52:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [Opposition to Proposal 6.docx](#)  
[2026 Stesha's speech in a PC letter.docx](#)  
[2026 Stesha Campbell support proposal 7.docx](#)

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Good afternoon, Peter.

Attached below are my public comments regarding the striped bass agenda. I don't have anything formally written in opposition to proposal number five, but I am strongly opposed to it. Additionally, instead of using postcards this year, we have collected signatures on letter-sized pages to minimize the amount of scanning required on your end. I will email those signatures to you this weekend, before Sunday at 4 PM.

Just a note, for some unknown reason, my documents become italicized when I attach them to my yahoo email. I have no idea, but I assume that should not matter.

Have a great weekend, thank you.

Stesha



Stuart J. Meltzer  
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[stu@fearlessfishmarket.com](mailto:stu@fearlessfishmarket.com)

Peter Duhamel  
DEM Division of Marine Fisheries  
3 Fort Wetherill Road  
Jamestown, RI 02835  
[peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov](mailto:peter.duhamel@dem.ri.gov)

Dear Mr. Duhamel,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am submitting comments in response to amendments to “2026 Commercial Striped Bass Management” that will be presented to the RI Marine Fisheries Council.

As you know, the Wild Striped Bass Stock/Biomass is under significant pressure and therefore heavily regulated. The market price for this fish should reflect this (i.e. high). However, this fishery is managed in such a way that produces the opposite effect. Currently, fishermen are incentivized to catch as much Wild Striped Bass as they are allowed as quickly as they are allowed before the collective quota is hit. This floods the market and crashes the price. We saw this happen this year (2025) in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This foments distrust between dealers and fishermen and both parties realize less value than is possible.

Instead, I propose a quota allocation system where each commercial fisherman who has recorded at least 20 landings the prior season (of any species) and landed Wild Striped Bass three or more times would receive Wild Striped Bass Quota. This would include about 116 fishermen. Given the existing quota, it would come to around thirty (30) fish per license holder, which is roughly the expected catch on any given season (currently). I propose distributing the quota in the form of tags to fishermen at the beginning of the season. Fishermen can use these tags to fish for Striped Bass *at any time throughout the year*. The tags can be transferred or sold among licenseholders.

Again, a limited species should be managed in a way that helps realize the maximum possible value, while balancing operational considerations and regulatory requirements. I think this proposal, or something similar, needs to be considered for the upcoming season. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart J. Meltzer  
Owner  
Fearless Fish Ikejime

## Support for Proposal 7

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Dear Members of the Council and Division,

My name is Thomasina Grant, and I grew up in the commercial fishing community. I'm writing in support of Proposal 7, which would maintain the current 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap sector through the rebuilding period or until the stock is declared rebuilt by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC).

Rhode Island's floating fish trap fishery is not only one of the oldest in the state, but one of the oldest continuously operating commercial fisheries in the country. Historical records from the National Marine Fisheries Service trace it back to the early 1800s, and in *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States* (1887), G. Browne Goode described Rhode Island's trap fishery in nearly the same form that exists today. At its height, hundreds of traps stretched along the coast from Narragansett to Sakonnet Point, marking the spring return of both the fish and the people who worked them.

Today, only one company remains to carry that legacy forward. The gear has endured because it works — it's simple, efficient, and selective. Fish swim in alive and can be released unharmed if they're not part of the catch. There's no drag on the ocean floor, no fuel-hungry chase, and near-zero bycatch. Researcher and documentarian Mark Starr, who extensively recorded the history of Rhode Island's fisheries — particularly around Point Judith — described the floating fish traps as “the greenest fishery in existence.” His work, which included photography, video, and written documentation, highlighted how a single trap boat can harvest close to a million pounds of fish while burning only a few hundred gallons of fuel. This method predates industrialization and, in many ways, represents what modern management now aims for: low impact, high accountability, and sustainability.

The floating fish trap fishery has helped shape Rhode Island's identity for generations. It reflects the work ethic, skill, and ingenuity of the people who built their lives around the ocean. When you see a trap along the coast, you're seeing history in motion — the same practice carried out by hand and by heart for over two centuries.

Proposal 7 protects more than a quota. It safeguards a living connection to Rhode Island's maritime heritage and ensures that the state continues to lead by example in sustainable fishing. Reducing the fish trap allocation now would not only harm a responsible fishery, it would risk erasing a tradition that has stood the test of time.

For the sake of history, community, and conservation, I urge you to support Proposal 7 and maintain the 39 percent striped bass allocation for the floating fish trap sector.

Sincerely,  
Thomasina Grant