

Massachusetts Striped Bass Association



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday June 12, 2008

MA Salt Water Fishing Registry (aka: License) Process to Begin ***A statement from the Massachusetts Striped Bass Association***

This morning, in newspapers across the state, it is being reported that beginning in 2009, the federal government has announced a plan through NOAA/Fisheries to institute a recreational angler registry in states that do not have a salt water angler registration (read: license), and this includes MA. This action is the result of a requirement in the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act passed in congress last year and has been anticipated for some time. This announcement will without a doubt trigger the formal process of MA considering developing a salt water fishing license.

There are many unanswered questions and issues involved in and related to the upcoming process and MSBA has been preparing our involvement for over a year. Over the past winter on behalf of the club I approached both the head of the MA DMF Sport Fishing Program, Dr. Mike Armstrong and MA DMF Director Paul Diodati and suggested that the DMF not wait to be forced into this process by a federal proposal and be proactive and convene a committee of recreational fishing representatives to explore options for MA recreational anglers. I am happy to report that last week, MSBA was invited to participate in just such a committee. MSBA President Bill Prodouz has appointed MSBA Past President and Gov't Affairs Officer Patrick Paquette to represent and also educate and inform the MSBA membership throughout this process.

Historically, MSBA has been opposed to a Salt Water Fishing License and that position will not change without a vote of the MSBA Membership. Conversations with and between members both on and off the floor of MSBA monthly meetings indicates the MSBA membership is open minded to some sort of registry/license if it contained certain details that would benefit our fishing community and would not result in just another tax. Being affiliated nationally with the Recreational Fishing Alliance also has enabled MSBA to learn about registry/license details that have and have not worked in other states. In the coming months, MSBA will communicate accurate information to our membership via our newsletter and website www.msba.net and will undergo the process of making decisions and taking positions. As always, MSBA is prepared for the coming process and will help lead the MA recreational fishing community through the upcoming process.

One note of caution: In the coming days and weeks there will be a great deal of speculation, rumor, confusion and misinformation written in newspapers and on the internet about the "pending" registry/license and related processes. MSBA urges all MA recreational anglers to avoid joining the inevitable emotional roller coaster and resist the urge to react to every bit of information. Our state has a fifty plus year history of organized recreational fishing organizations and the best way to address the issues is through these organizations that have the experience and relationships needed to navigate through the political process we now face. In addition to participating on the MA DMF committee mentioned above, MSBA has already taken action to provide our membership with accurate information. At the MSBA membership meeting on June 25th, in addition to the monthly entertainment, MSBA will shorten it's regular business meeting in order to hear a 20 minute presentation, without debate, from the federal agencies developing the angler registration program announced today.

For more information, attend MSBA monthly meetings, monitor www.msba.net, read the MSBA monthly newsletter or contact MSBA Gov't Affairs Officer Patrick Paquette (BasicPatrick@aol.com).