

HOUSE No. 659

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Matthew A. Beaton

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act protecting the legal harvest of striped bass.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Matthew A. Beaton

11th Worcester

Kimberly N. Ferguson

1st Worcester

HOUSE No. 659

By Mr. Beaton of Shrewsbury, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 659) of Matthew A. Beaton and Kimberly N. Ferguson for legislation to implement a striped bass commercial tagging program at the point of harvest. Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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In the Year Two Thousand Thirteen
—————

An Act protecting the legal harvest of striped bass.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Whereas the illegal harvesting of striped bass has the potential to undermine the
2 sustainability of striped bass populations on the Atlantic Coast; and

3 Whereas the illegal harvest of striped bass has the potential to reduce the economic
4 opportunities of commercial fisherman who are legally participating in the fishery; and

5 Whereas at the February 2012 Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission (ASMFC)
6 Striped Bass Management Board meeting a motion was passed to initiate the development of an
7 addendum to incorporate the recommendations made by the Interstate Watershed Task Force
8 (IWTF) and the ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) on reducing the illegal harvest of
9 striped bass; and

10 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that all Atlantic States and jurisdictions
11 implement a uniform commercial tagging system where striped bass are harvested and landed for
12 sale; and

13 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that all fish harvested for sale be tagged
14 immediately upon possession at the point of harvest; and

15 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that the States and jurisdictions issue a set of
16 number tags based on a sound scientific sample of the average (mean) weight of legal-sized fish
17 harvested in open season for that type of gear divided into the weight quota; and

18 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended requiring all unused tags to be returned on
19 annual or seasonal basis and prohibit license renewal if unused tags are not returned; and

20 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended the implementation of license revocation or
21 suspension as a primary penalty for state or federal violations;; and

22 Whereas the IWTF and LEC recommended that states and jurisdictions' law enforcement
23 officers have real-time access to tag numbers issued to each fisherman; and

24 Whereas at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission 2012 Summer Meeting a
25 motion was made to approve the IWTF and LEC recommendations for a uniform commercial
26 tagging program at the point of harvest; and

27 Whereas a motion was made by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to substitute for
28 this option to tag at the point of harvest; and

29 Whereas this motion was practically for no action to be taken now and for the states to
30 act at their own discretion at a later date; and

31 Whereas that motion passed by an 8 in favor, 7 opposed and 1 abstention and thus a
32 motion for no action was accepted;

33 Therefore be it resolved that the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Commission working
34 with the Massachusetts Director of Marine Fisheries adopt the recommendations made by the
35 Interstate Watershed Task Force and the Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission Law
36 Enforcement Committee to implement a striped bass commercial tagging program at the point of
37 harvest.