



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.

Addabbo plans to once again support bill that would protect important wildlife off the Rockaway coast

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR. September 10, 2018

| ISSUE: **ROCKAWAY, ENVIRONMENT, OVERFISHING, PURSE SEINE, ADDABBO**

Although this summer is practically over, State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr. is already looking ahead to making important changes to the environmental conservation law for next summer which could positively impact coastal areas within his district.

During this year's legislative session, a bill (S.8570) was introduced to the Senate floor, which looks to amend the environmental conservation law as it pertains to the taking of a species of fish known as the Atlantic Menhaden from the waters of the district with a purse seine. Senator Kenneth P. LaValle introduced the bill, and Addabbo was a co-sponsor. Unfortunately, the bill was not voted on by the Senate during its legislative session.

Seine fishing involves using a large fishing net, called a seine, that is cast off the side of usually large commercial fishing boats to collect fish. The Menhaden fish is a popular target for seine fishing because these fish are used for fishmeal and fish-oil-based products, but they are also used as bait by local fishermen to catch larger fish that they in turn can eat or sell. The Menhaden are also a major food source for whales, dolphins, and other large marine life.

By 2012, Atlantic Menhaden were caught to such a large degree that their numbers dwindled in the area considerably. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission made changes in order to protect these fish, which were successful as the Atlantic Menhaden are making a strong comeback in the waters off the Rockaways and Broad Channel in recent years.

“Overfishing a certain species can have major unseen impacts on our areas’ wildlife, much as the overfishing, or catching, of the Atlantic Menhaden has had in the waters of the Rockaways,” Addabbo, a member of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, said. “I am pleased to see that the numbers of this important species are on the rise here in the Rockaways, which will assuredly lead to better hauls for our local fishermen, and has already had a positive effect on our tourism industry as the increased number of Menhaden have brought whales and dolphins right to our shores.”

“The Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher's commend Senator Addabbo for his leadership on this critical environmental issue. After over a decade of hard work and effort, the waters of Jamaica Bay and the Hudson River are now cleaner than any time in the last 100 years,” said Dan Mundy, vice president of the Jamaica Bay Ecowatcher's. “These clean waters are now playing host to whales and dolphins in numbers not seen in decades. The Menhaden fish that are now so prevalent in our waters are not only a primary reason for the presence of so many whales and dolphins, but are the single most important fish in the ocean and are a food source for every major fish species. The threat that currently exists is from these massive vacuum ships that can wipe these species out. These ships are not local but rather all based out of Virginia and currently are allowed to enter the NY waters and take millions of Menhaden leaving areas void of this critical resource. The environmental gains we have made are threatened by the operations of these vessels. This bill would prohibit these vessels from entering the NY waters and would help to protect this critical species. We look forward to seeing this bill become a law and to enjoying the continued magnificent spectacle of whales and dolphins

off of the coast of Rockaway.”

However, as these fish return to the waters, so do the massive reduction vessels that use purse seines to gather tons of these fish out of the water, Addabbo warns.

“Under current laws, any fishing vessel that purchases a permit can legally use these purse seines to capture large amounts of this vital fish species,” Addabbo said. “We are just starting to see increased numbers of the Atlantic Menhaden in our waters and have already seen some of the positive benefits. That is why I will work to move this bill along during the next legislative session to ensure that our local fishermen and wildlife are not negatively impacted by overfishing.”

RELATED LEGISLATION

2017-S8570

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly

- Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor

- Signed By Governor

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Relates to the taking of menhaden; provides for the expiration and repeal of such provisions

May 10, 2018

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Kenneth P. LaValle](#)

Do you support this bill?