

Testimony of Mr. William Newell  
Owner, Still Kickin' Seafood  
Subcommittee on Fisheries and Oceans  
July, 27, 2006

I have been a commercial fisherman in the lower Chesapeake Bay for 17 years. I see thousands of acres of striped bass migrating to the north every spring eating everything in their path. We used to catch thousands of pounds of grey trout a day for 3 – 4 weeks. Last year I caught about 200 pounds for the whole spring and about 800 pounds this year. Last year I had the worst spot season since I've been fishing. These striped bass gorge themselves sun up to sun down. If they can find any light over water they will eat all night too. Striped bass are the most dominating fish in the Atlantic Ocean and has recovered over 200 – 300 percent. Northeast National Marine Fisheries was supposed to open this fishery when it recovered. They have not. These fish are eating everything in the Chesapeake Bay except for oysters and clams. If they could figure out how, they would eat them too. If these catch limits are not doubled or tripled for recreational and commercial fishing there will not be any other fish to catch and I will be out of business in 3 – 5 years. We have a very serious problem here. People say the menhaden are being over fished – not true. We work side by side with these boats. Menhaden is the primary food source for striped bass. We've lost 1 ½ months of our fall trout season due to the migrating of the small striped bass 1-3 pound class. The massive numbers of this size fish will be devastating in the future to all other species in the Chesapeake Bay and our coastal waters. If the NMFS continues to close and cut our fisheries due to the inadequate stock assessments, America's 1<sup>st</sup> industry will come to a close in the near future. But keep in mind that when this time comes, when you go to your favorite seafood restaurant, and order a seafood platter you will be getting a pasteurized and frozen product from China, Indonesia, and other foreign countries instead of fresh seafood from our local boats from Maine to North Carolina. I strongly feel that there

should be a full investigation against national marine fisheries and our local states as to why they keep taking and taking and not giving anything back. I guess cutting and deleting fisheries is the only way they can justify their jobs. I see recreational fisherman travel hundreds of miles with their boats and gear to our local cities and participate in our striped bass fishery, buying state fishing licenses, renting hotels, buying fuel and etc. This is a major revenue for our coastal cities just to catch one or two fish per person per day. Most of the time the fish they catch are barely minimum size. I hope my statement today will bring new light to congress and other recreational and commercial affiliations of the mismanagement of our fisheries.