

November 16, 2011

California Fish & Game Commission
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Re: Striped Bass Regulation Proposal

Dear Jim Kellogg, Chairman & Commissioners: Richard Rogers; Michael Sutton;
Daniel Richards & Jack Baylis:

I am writing you regarding the proposed striped bass regulation changes. I am urging you to vote no on this proposal, for a number of reasons.

As I am sure you are aware, this proposal is the result of a settlement reached in a lawsuit brought by agricultural interests in the southern valley. Rather than continue to fight this lawsuit, which the Dept of F&G was winning at the time, a settlement was reached to change the existing striped bass regulations. This regulation change proposal has its roots in a legal/economic decision not a marine biology decision. To allow a third party group to change F&G regulations through a lawsuit sets a dangerous precedent. After all it is the job of your commission to set regulations, not a wealthy self interest group. If this resolution is approved, in the future any group or person can expect as the result of a lawsuit to have California Fish & Game regulations altered to suit them. Twice this same deregulation of striped bass was presented to the State Assembly in the form of an assembly bill. Twice the deregulation failed to pass the Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife. In fact, Jared Huffman, Chairman of the Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife said while reviewing this deregulation legislation that he could never support a measure that singled out one species (striped bass) as the problem with salmon decline. It is obvious that the people of California do not want this deregulation as expressed through their government representatives.

At the recent public meeting held on November 8th, in Rio Vista both the head of the fisheries division and the chief biologist for striped bass at the Dept of Fish and Game agreed that it is the water diversions in the delta that have the biggest effect on the salmon decline, "but they were not there to talk about water" The presentation of graphs and charts, showing growth rates and abundance numbers of both striped bass and salmon, did little to convince that the reason for the decline of the listed species (salmon and delta smelt) had anything to do with striped bass. In fact the evidence clearly showed that all three species thrived in the years of abundant rainfall, and declined the most during the years of increased water pumping. Again this demonstration showed that this regulation change proposal has no basis in sound scientific evidence. The leading biologists in this field have proclaimed that these regulation changes, at best, will have no effect on the listed species, and at worst could make the situation far worse. By eliminating the top predator from the system another species will take their place and could have even more damaging effects on the listed species. I ask you to consider the fact that salmon and striped bass have coexisted in this delta bay system for over 130 years, and have thrived and declined at the same rates over the same time periods. It is

obvious that what is affecting one species is affecting the other, not one on the other. I also ask you this question, “How could 600,000 striped bass (historic low population numbers) do the damage to the listed species that 10+ million striped bass did not do in the 1950’s and 60’s?”

The striped bass is a highly valued game fish. The population, already at historic lows, cannot withstand the pressure this regulation change proposal would bring to bear on them. The F&G biologist promised an “aggressive monitoring program” he called “adaptive management” to assure that striped bass did not go extinct as a result. First this monitoring is not included in the proposal. Second as anyone who is involved with or does business with the state of California knows there are not the funds to pay for all the existing programs, not to mention taking on a new one. The Dept of F&G simply does not have the funds or the available manpower to adequately monitor the effects of a regulation change on the striped bass population, and I fear that the results would be disastrous for the striped bass.

The striped bass fishery supports party boats, guides, bait shops, boat sales, gas stations, travel industry/tourism and many related businesses. Annually the fishery contributes millions of dollars to our local economy as well as the Department of Fish and Game through the sales of fishing licenses.

Please do not attempt to fix a water diversion problem with a fishing regulation change.

Respectfully submitted,