

2025 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 473

Designating the third full week of September, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Commercial Waterman Safety Week in Virginia.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 3, 2025

Agreed to by the Senate, February 18, 2025

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's commercial watermen and the seafood industry generate \$1.1 billion in economic impact for the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, every year, more than 1,500 commercial watermen take to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to harvest scallops, clams, blue crab, oysters, flounder, mackerel, menhaden, and other species, a tradition passed down through generations; and

WHEREAS, anchored by the menhaden fishery in the Northern Neck, the Commonwealth stands as the largest seafood producer on the East Coast of the United States based on volume of landings; and

WHEREAS, commercial watermen's landings sustain coastal communities every day and have inspired culinary masterpieces from chefs throughout the Commonwealth and around the world; and

WHEREAS, existing regulations and policies, developed by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and Virginia's robust scientific community, make the Commonwealth's seafood industry and the work of commercial watermen a sustainable practice for the future; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries have served as a vital workplace since the 1600s, and it is imperative that commercial watermen have access to a secure and safe work environment; and

WHEREAS, commercial watermen routinely brave multiple hazards in pursuit of their catch, but growing aggression towards Virginia's commercial fishing industry increases the risks of injury at an already inherently dangerous job; and

WHEREAS, given that a large portion of commercial watermen's income is dependent on their catch, a safe and productive workplace is essential to ensuring the livelihood of the Commonwealth's commercial watermen; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth aims to raise awareness about the safety and well-being of commercial waterman, emphasizing the importance of safe watercraft operations; and

WHEREAS, residents of and visitors to the Commonwealth are encouraged to continue to engage in recreational fishing activities while respecting the operations of commercial watermen; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly designate the third full week of September, in 2025 and in each succeeding year, as Commercial Waterman Safety Week in Virginia; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates transmit a copy of this resolution to the Virginia Watermen's Association so that members of the organization may be apprised of the sense of the General Assembly of Virginia in this matter; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates post the designation of this week on the General Assembly's website.

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