



# PRESS RELEASE

## Recreational Fishing Alliance

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### **FREE ANGLER REGISTRY BILL CLEARS NEW HURDLE Budget Committee Sends S1122/A823 For Full Senate Vote As Early As 12/20**

*December 14, 2010* - This morning in Committee Room 4 on the 1st floor of the State House Annex in Trenton, the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee voted unanimously to send S1122 (and its Assembly companion bill A823) to the Senate for a full vote. According to the Recreational Fishing Alliance (RFA), the committee's vote today means the Senate could vote on New Jersey's saltwater registry bill as early as December 20.

According RFA Executive Director Jim Donofrio who testified before the committee in support of the legislation, all eleven Senate committee members who heard statements today from both sides easily saw the fiscal benefits of the legislation and found complete consensus with regard to the merits of the bills.

"The legislators who have supported the free registry have made it very clear that there's no place for a saltwater fee in New Jersey," Donofrio said. "It's quite obvious that the Senators and Assembly representatives from various committees are in unanimous consent that a free saltwater registry is the way to move forward at this time, and we're very thankful for the democratic process," he added.

Sponsored by Sen. Jeff Van Drew (D-Cape May) and Sen. Jennifer Beck (R-Red Bank), S1122 would require the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to maintain a free annual saltwater registry program to meet the new federal mandate for data collection, allowing New Jersey's coastal fishermen to avoid paying a \$15 federal registration fee beginning January 1. The bill was approved unanimously in the Senate Environment Committee last week.

An Assembly version of the legislation (A823) has already passed (54-16) which would allow the state to apply for exempted state designation from the federal registration requirement. Sponsored by Assembly representatives Nelson Albano (D-Cape May), Matt Milam (D-Cape May), John Amodeo (R-Northfield), Celeste Riley (D-Bridgeton), Paul Moriarty (D-Turnersville), Scott T. Rumana (R-Wayne) and Gilbert Wilson (D-Audubon), A823 was also unanimously approved by the Assembly Environment Committee.

Donofrio said Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee Chairman Sen. Paul Sarlo (D-Wood-Ridge) deserved thanks for working in bipartisan fashion to get the bill through the committee and on to the Senate for a vote. "Of course, we have to thank Sen. Van Drew for the heavy lifting required to move this legislation, he's been right on message and delivers it from his heart."

Donofrio said that several New Jersey organizations showed up in support of S1122 last week when the bill was heard before the Senate Environment Committee, as he praised representatives from RFA-NJ, United Boatmen, Marine Trades Association (MTA), Berkley Striper Club, Hi-Mar Striper Club, Village Harbor Fishing Club, the Fish Hawks, Forked River Tuna Club, New Jersey Beach Buggy Association, and NJSaltwaterFisherman.com for turning out in Trenton for last week's hearing. "There have been a few groups who've openly supported an administrative fee to implement this registry, but that's not been an option which was ever presented to our community," Donofrio said, while thanking MTA Executive Director Melissa Danko for also testifying in favor of S1122.

"Our elected officials have heard from both sides, and now that it's been unanimously approved in committee after committee and overwhelming supported by the state Assembly, it's time to get see this registry law put into effect as soon as possible so that we get our community back together to discuss the real problems impacting our marine fisheries," Donofrio said, adding "now it's up to Senate President

Sweeney to get this vote onto the floor of the Senate for a vote, and then on to the Governor to sign this bill into law."

To hear recorded testimony on S1122 from the December 9th Senate Environment Committee Hearing, including Sen. Van Drew's advocacy on behalf of New Jersey anglers and coastal businesses, visit: <http://rmserver.njleg.state.nj.us/internet/2010/SEN/1209-1000AM-M0-1.wma>.

You can also access the December 14<sup>th</sup> Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee hearing at: <http://rmserver.njleg.state.nj.us/internet/2010/SBA/1214-1000AM-M0-1.wma>.

*The Recreational Fishing Alliance is a national, grassroots political action organization representing recreational fishermen and the recreational fishing industry on marine fisheries issues. RFA's Mission is to safeguard the rights of saltwater anglers, protect marine, boat and tackle industry jobs, and ensure the long-term sustainability of our Nation's saltwater fisheries. For information, call 888-JOIN-RFA or visit [www.joinrfa.org](http://www.joinrfa.org).*