

# HOUSE BILL 915

M2

6lr3144  
CF SB 837

---

By: **Delegates Jacobs, Carozza, Cassilly, Hornberger, S. Howard, Malone, Mautz, Otto, and Reilly**

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 2016

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

---

## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Crabs – Harvest Times – Trotlines and Crab Pots**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to adopt regulations  
4 that provide the option to a tidal fish licensee authorized to catch crabs using  
5 trotlines and crab pots to work certain hours during a certain time period; requiring  
6 a licensee who chooses a certain hours-of-work option to notify the Department of  
7 that choice by a certain date; prohibiting a licensee who chooses a certain  
8 hours-of-work option from changing that option until the following license year;  
9 requiring a licensee who chooses a certain hours-of-work option to affix a certain  
10 display on the licensee's vessel signifying the choice of that option; and generally  
11 relating to harvest times for crabs using trotlines and crab pots.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
13 Article – Natural Resources  
14 Section 4–803  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2015 Supplement)

17 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
18 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

19 **Article – Natural Resources**

20 4–803.

21 (a) The Department may adopt rules and regulations to effectuate the following  
22 purposes:

23 (1) To restrict catching and possessing any blue crab;

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



## HOUSE BILL 915

1 (2) The methods by which crabs are taken;

2 (3) To close or open any specified area to catch crabs;

3 (4) To prohibit or restrict devices used to catch crabs;

4 (5) To establish seasons to catch crabs;

5 (6) To establish that the workday for tidal fish licensees who catch crabs  
6 using trotline gear may begin earlier than 1 hour before sunrise; and

7 (7) To establish minimum size limits for hard, soft, and peeler crabs.  
8 However, this section does not permit the Department to change existing license fees for  
9 catching, picking, canning, packing, or shipping cooked hard or soft crabs or crab meat; or  
10 for selling, or shipping live hard or soft crabs by barrel or crate. The Department may set  
11 license fees on types of gear or equipment if not otherwise set by law.

12 (b) (1) The Department may not adopt regulations to:

13 (i) Restrict a tidal fish licensee who catches crabs using trotline gear  
14 to a workday of less than 8 hours per day, excluding time spent setting or taking up gear;  
15 or

16 (ii) Establish time restrictions on a tidal fish licensee using trotline  
17 gear for setting and taking up gear.

18 (2) If the Department authorizes the workday to begin earlier than 1 hour  
19 before sunrise, then:

20 (i) **[The] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION, THE**  
21 **Department may not adopt regulations to restrict a tidal fish licensee who catches crabs**  
22 **using trotline gear to a workday of less than 11 hours per day, including time spent setting**  
23 **or taking up gear; and**

24 (ii) Trotline gear may not be set earlier than the catch time  
25 established by the Department.

26 **(c) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS THAT PROVIDE**  
27 **THE OPTION TO A LICENSEE WHO IS AUTHORIZED TO CATCH CRABS USING**  
28 **TROT LINES OR CRAB POTS TO WORK THE FOLLOWING HOURS FROM JULY 15**  
29 **THROUGH SEPTEMBER 15 OF ANY YEAR, INCLUSIVE:**

30 **(i) FOR A LICENSEE WHO USES TROTLINE GEAR, HOURS THAT**  
31 **BEGIN 2 HOURS BEFORE SUNRISE AND END 8 HOURS AFTER SUNRISE, NOT**  
32 **INCLUDING TIME SPENT SETTING OR TAKING UP GEAR; OR**

1                   **(II) FOR A LICENSEE WHO USES CRAB POTS, HOURS THAT BEGIN**  
2 **1.5 HOURS BEFORE SUNRISE AND END 6.5 HOURS AFTER SUNRISE.**

3                   **(2) (I) A LICENSEE WHO CHOOSES THE OPTION OF WORKING THE**  
4 **EARLIER HOURS UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION SHALL NOTIFY THE**  
5 **DEPARTMENT OF THAT CHOICE BY JULY 1 OF THE LICENSE YEAR.**

6                   **(II) AFTER A LICENSEE CHOOSES THE EARLY-HOURS OPTION**  
7 **FOR THE LICENSE YEAR, THE LICENSEE MAY NOT CHANGE OPTIONS UNTIL THE**  
8 **FOLLOWING LICENSE YEAR.**

9                   **(3) A LICENSEE WHO CHOOSES THE EARLY-HOURS OPTION SHALL**  
10 **AFFIX A DISPLAY ON THE LICENSEE'S VESSEL IN A FORM AND MANNER DETERMINED**  
11 **BY THE DEPARTMENT TO SIGNIFY THE CHOICE OF THE EARLY-HOURS OPTION.**

12                   **[(c)] (D)** The Department's regulations may not become effective under this  
13 section until the Department first holds public hearings. The Department shall advertise  
14 the time, place, and purpose of the hearings in one newspaper of general daily circulation  
15 in the State, and at least in one newspaper circulated in the affected region of each county  
16 whose waters may be directly affected by the proposed regulations for 2 successive weeks  
17 in advance of the hearings.

18                   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
19 October 1, 2016.