

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1435 (Delegate Glass, *et al.*)
Environment and Transportation

Fishing Under a Boat License - Repeal of Registration Requirement (Fishing
Freedom Act of 2016)

This bill repeals the requirement for an individual to register with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) before fishing on a boat to which an annual special Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license applies.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2106.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect State finances. However, according to DNR, it results in the loss of Maryland's exemption status with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) saltwater angler registry, as discussed below.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: There is an annual special Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license (decal) that, when permanently affixed to a boat registered in any state, authorizes any person on the boat to fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay or in its tributaries up to tidal boundaries or in State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays and their tributaries. The annual license fee is \$50. The license may not be used on a commercial fishing boat. An individual on a licensed boat does not need a

license; however, the individual must register with DNR. This registration is called the Maryland saltwater angler registration. There is no registration fee.

DNR advises that the saltwater angler registry is a federal requirement. The federal Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act includes a saltwater angler registry in an effort to gather better recreational fishing data. According to DNR, the registry creates a phone directory that NOAA uses to improve the efficiency of catch and effort surveys. Currently, Maryland is listed as an exempt state. This means that anglers fishing in Maryland saltwaters (or tidal waters) do not need to register with NOAA. The State provides the contact information for anglers to NOAA for surveys. The current license structure allows the State to capture angler contact information with the Maryland saltwater recreational fishing license or, for those circumstances where an individual fishing license is not required, the saltwater angler registry.

DNR advises that since the bill repeals the requirement for individuals to register when fishing on a boat that has a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing decal, Maryland will lose its exemption status with NOAA. If this happens, DNR advises that *any* angler fishing in Maryland saltwaters, even if they are licensed by the State, will need to comply with the federal requirement through NOAA. Thus, all saltwater anglers would need to register with NOAA online at a cost of \$29 per registration.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

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md/lgc

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