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BILL NO.: **SB 114**

TITLE: Natural Resources - Nuisance Organisms - Pilot Projects and Northern Snakeheads

SPONSOR: Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee (By Request - Departmental - Natural Resources)

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: January 23, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 114 – Natural Resources - Nuisance Organisms - Pilot Projects and Northern Snakeheads. This legislation would authorize the Department of Natural Resources to institute pilot projects to control nuisance organisms, including authorizing fishing for the northern snakehead with a hook and line.

Protecting our aquatic resources is a top priority for Baltimore County, and the introduction of nuisance organisms in these waters threatens the stability of their ecosystems. The northern snakehead is a particularly invasive species. Maryland in particular has suffered from the presence of this species over the last few decades. A 2002 incident in which a Croton pond was forced to be drained when a northern snakehead was discovered highlights the difficulties of stemming the invasion of this species.

Currently, licenses are offered to hunt the northern snakehead through bow fishing. This can be difficult, however, as the species is known for being quick and can reside in murky waters. Introducing a license that allows individuals to hunt the northern snakehead with simpler techniques, in this case a hook and line, would make this endeavor accessible to a wider range of Maryland residents and would likely lead to a decline in the species' population.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests **FAVORABLE** report on SB 114. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.