



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 1025

Task Force on Reciprocity of Fishing License Penalties

DATE: MARCH 17, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation supports Senate Bill 1025 and recommends a favorable report from the Environment and Transportation Committee. This bill would convene a Task Force on fishing license penalties comprising representatives from Maryland, Virginia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission to hold Maryland fisheries violators accountable within their jurisdiction in a manner consistent with the interstate wildlife violator compact.

The interstate wildlife violator compact was created to allow for reciprocal acknowledgement of license revocations and suspensions in each of the participating 43 states. Under current law, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission is not required to enforce license revocations and suspensions to those who have broken the law in Maryland. Senate Bill 1025 will provide recommendations on the feasibility and implementation of such reciprocity. If implemented, this reciprocity would create a strong united front between Maryland and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, in order to ensure the protection of the vital natural resources of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has entered 743 individuals under the compact in the last four years. Without cooperation from the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, these individuals can simply move their operations to the Potomac River and continue the exact same activity for which their privileges have been revoked in Maryland. Granting violators the privilege to own a fishing license within the jurisdiction of the Potomac River Fisheries Commission after blatantly disobeying rules and regulations set forth in the state of Maryland undermines our law enforcement and jeopardizes our fisheries.

As the second largest tributary in the Chesapeake Bay, the Potomac River is an integral component to the overall health and success of the Bay. It is imperative that the Potomac River Fisheries Commission engage in collaborative stewardship of the estuary and follow suit with the neighboring states of Maryland and Virginia. Uniform enforcement across the entirety of the Chesapeake Bay will help to set a precedent that those who willingly violate the law will not be tolerated.

For these reasons, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation strongly supports Senate Bill 1025 and recommends a favorable report from the Environment and Transportation Committee. For more information, please contact Dr. Allison Colden at acolden@cbf.org or 410.268.8816.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403
Phone (410) 268-8816 • Fax (410) 280-3513