

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB207.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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January 23, 2024

Senate Bill 207 – Natural Resources – Northern Snakehead – Common Name

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 207, which is intended to address the challenges created from the presence of the invasive snakehead fish in Maryland's waterways. This bill seeks to encourage consumption of the snakehead as a means to better manage its population within our waters by giving the snakehead a new, more appealing common name, the "Paxtuent fish."

As we all know, the snakehead has proven to be a threat to the ecological balance of our state. Its aggressive nature and ability to thrive in diverse environments, including those with low oxygen levels, have raised concerns among environmental experts and watermen for many years. One potential solution that has been pursued to reduce Maryland's snakehead population has been to catch them for use as food. I have had a number of discussions with stakeholders who work to increase the consumption of snakehead, and it is clear that these efforts suffer from one major problem - the snakehead has a limited market of potential consumers because of its unappetizing name.

For this reason, Senate Bill 207 would rename the snakehead fish to the "Patuxent fish" to emphasize the importance of preserving the natural heritage of our Patuxent River, its tributaries and the counties it touches, including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's. By linking the invasive species to this important waterway, we can work to protect and conserve our native ecosystems, while also providing Marylanders with a renewed opportunity to enjoy a fish with a much more common and desirable name.

Altering the common name of a fish has become a successful way to encourage their harvest and consumption. For example, the Dolphinfish became Mahi-mahi, the Slimehead became the Orange Roughy, the Hogfish became King Mackerel, and the Patagonian Toothfish became Chilean Sea Bass. In this case, I believe that an appetizing name is all that stands in the way of consumer acceptance. Renaming the snakehead to make it more marketable would have substantial benefits for our watermen, our economy, and our ecosystem.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 207. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey

The Patuxent Fish.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

The Patuxent Fish



Renaming the Northern
Snakehead: Managing an
invasive species



Slimehead: Orange Roughy



Dolphinfish: Mahi Mahi or Dorado



Patagonian Toothfish: Chilean Sea Bass



Snakehead: Patuxent Fish



SB 0207 2024 (Northern Snakehead Rename) PDF.pdf

Uploaded by: Shelby Watson-Hampton

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

SB 0207 – Natural Resources – Northern Snakehead – Common Name

January 22, 2024

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC), a division of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) is in support of SB 0207 – Natural Resources – Northern Snakehead – Common Name, entered by Senator Bailey. As SMADC's mission is to increase the overall economic viability of local producers, we find this bill to be important to the success of local fishermen, and to the local waterways.

The proposed change is intended to address the challenges created by the presence of the invasive snakehead fish in Maryland's waterways. Scientists, environmentalists, fishermen and watermen are all in strong agreement that the invasive fish is wreaking havoc on the ecosystem of the local waterways and needs to be removed as much as possible. One way of ensuring that removal is to make the fish, which has a delicious white flaky meat that is enjoyable to eat, more appealing to consumers. Therefore, this bill seeks to encourage consumer consumption of the snakehead by giving it a new name that will look delectable on local menus. Using a more enticing name, chefs, restaurants, and stores could better advertise and promote the product.

Numerous discussions with stakeholders who currently work to increase the consumption of snakehead make it clear that these efforts suffer from one major problem - the snakehead has a limited market of potential consumers because of its unappetizing name. For this reason, Senate Bill 207 would rename the snakehead fish to the "Patuxent fish" to emphasize the importance of preserving the natural heritage of our Patuxent River, its tributaries, and the counties it touches, including Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's. By linking the invasive species to this important waterway, we can work to protect and conserve our native ecosystems, while also providing Marylanders with a renewed opportunity to enjoy a fish with a much more common and desirable name.

Altering the common name of a fish has become a proven and successful way to encourage their harvest and consumption. Renaming the snakehead to make it more marketable would have substantial benefits for our watermen, our economy, and our ecosystem.

We ask that you support SB 0207.

Thank You,
Shelby Watson-Hampton
SMADC Director

The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission
is a division of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
P.O. Box 745 Hughesville, MD 20637
Phone - 240-528-8850 ~ Email – info@smadc.com



Northern Snakehead Common Name 2024 SB0207.pdf

Uploaded by: Rachel Dean

Position: FWA

RE: Senate Bill 207

Energy, Education and The Environment Committee

My name is Rahel Dean. I am the Secretary for the Calvert County Watermen's Association, and I am a Commissioner on the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission and the Patuxent River Commission for the State of Maryland. Today, I am here as a seafood business owner. My family owns Patuxent River Seafood, and our business relies on the resources of the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay. Despite Maryland's best efforts, the invasive snakehead has become part of the Bay's ecosystem. Unfortunately, that means it is negatively impacting our native species. Between the snakehead and the blue catfish, the Patuxent River is suffering. I appreciate the hard work that the State of Maryland is doing to market snakehead, but it is still difficult to get anyone to eat a fish called a snake. That is unfortunate because snakehead rank just behind white perch as the best tasting fish in the Bay. Unless we can do something to convince people to eat more snakehead, these fish might just eat the competition out of house and home—literary. If we can rename the fish, it could help our cause, just like restaurants formerly used the terms "dolphin" on their menus but switched to "mahi mahi" to avoid confusion and outrage among guests. While Senator Bailey's efforts to rename the snakehead the Patuxent fish are a noble cause, it doesn't have a ring to it. A restaurant menu with Patuxent Tacos just doesn't sound right. I would like to offer a friendly amendment. The Bailey Fish. While I am by no means saying Senator Bailey shares the slimy, predatory characteristics of this fish, I do believe his contributions to the conservation of Natural Resources as a NRP Officer and now as a Senator warrant a fish be named after him. Besides, I think we can get behind fried Bailey, baked Bailey, Bailey tacos, and Bailey bites. I hope the sponsor of the bill will be willing to take this one for the team and cement Bailey fish on restaurant menus throughout Maryland.

Rachel Dean 301-672-3509
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SB0207_DNR_INF_EEE_1-23-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: INFO



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

January 23, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 207 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Northern Snakehead – Common Name

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: INFORMATIONAL

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The agency is aware of concerns related to marketing snakehead in the food industry under its current common name. The agency is also held to federal law and often works in conjunction with the federal government, other states, and/or universities on research, law, and funding. Therefore, the agency would still need to properly cite articles, studies, and law that contain the common name of Northern Snakehead. Currently, market-related changes and ideas are handled in coordination with the Maryland Department of Agriculture’s Seafood Marketing Program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No similar bills have been proposed previously.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would change the common name of the Northern Snakehead to Patuxent Fish.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
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