

TODD B. MORGAN
Legislative District 29C
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 215
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3319 · 301-858-3319
800-492-7122 Ext. 3319
Todd.Morgan@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 29, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

HB19 – Natural Resources – Northern Snakehead – Common Name

Chairman Korman:

The intent of this bill is to provide a response to the invasive species which has plagued our Patuxent River and other waterways by encouraging the consumption of the Northern Snakehead.

The Snakehead is one of the largest threats facing the native aquatic population in our Patuxent River. The aggressive nature of the fish and its adaptability to a varied of environment has raised concerns from environmental experts and local watermen alike. This bill aims to preserve the natural heritage of our Patuxent and encourage the capture and eating of the Snakehead fish. The Patuxent River is the only self-contained river in Maryland; it touches Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince Georges, and St. Mary's Counties.

The Crux of this is we have a public relations problem. Watermen want to catch these fish, restaurants want to sell them, and environmental experts want the fish gone. The big roadblock to all of this is the lack of consumer interest in eating the fish. It tastes great, makes delicious fillets, and is considered a delicacy in many parts of the world. However, most people can't get past the name of the fish – nobody wants to eat a fish named the Snakehead!

Fish names have been changed around the world to enhance their marketability to consumers. For example, the Slimehead, had its name changed in the 1980s to the Orange Roughy, and it is now a very popular dish in restaurants globally. Before changing to its modern and exotic name, Mahi-Mahi was known by its common name Dolphinfish. Restaurants adopted its Hawaiian name to reassure diners they were not eating Dolphin.

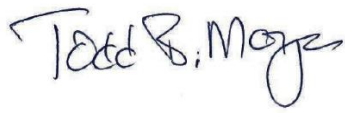
Other examples of name changes include the Patagonian Toothfish better known as the Chilean Sea Bass; Maryland's Striped Bass, known as the Rockfish; and the Goosefish which is more commonly known as Monkfish.

After this simple name change, Monkfish consumption increased over 5 times more than before. This is a tried and tested way to increase the appeal of an unfortunately named fish.

The bill renames the Snakehead, the Patuxent Fish, for the river it has invaded; however, I am not committed to the name and am willing for the committee to consider of other appropriate names.

I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 19

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd B. Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "M".

Todd B. Morgan
Delegate, Calvert/St. Mary's Counties (29C)