

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2000 Session

FISCAL NOTE
Revised

Senate Bill 417 (Senator Stoltzfus)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Power Dredging - Oysters

This bill changes the current licensing requirements for harvesting oysters with a power dredge from a license system to a permit system. A person must be permitted by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to catch oysters with a power dredge in the waters of the State that lie contiguous to Calvert, Dorchester, Somerset, and St. Mary's counties. DNR may only issue a power dredge permit to the holder of an oyster harvester license. A person may hold an oyster harvesting license and a power dredge permit simultaneously, but a person who is permitted to catch oysters with a power dredge may not harvest oysters by any other harvesting method on days when oysters are harvested with a power dredge.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: This bill would not materially affect State operations or finances.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: A person must be licensed by DNR to catch oysters with a power dredge in the waters of the State that lie contiguous to Somerset County. Except for a person who holds a dredge boat license from DNR to catch oysters, a person must be licensed by DNR to catch oysters with a power dredge in Calvert, Dorchester, and St. Mary's counties. A person may not hold an oyster harvester license and a power dredge license simultaneously. DNR may issue a power dredge license only to the holder of any oyster harvester license, but DNR must suspend a person's oyster harvester license on issuance of a power dredge license.

When a person surrenders the power dredge license to DNR, DNR must exchange at no cost the power dredging license for the person's former, currently valid oyster license.

Background: Power dredging in specified areas of Somerset County was allowed from 1983 to 1993. Chapter 576 of 1997 reinstated the former law permitting power dredging and established a sanctuary for oyster restoration projects. Chapter 580 of 1999 expanded the area in the waters of Somerset County where power dredging is permitted and authorized DNR to establish oyster sanctuaries by regulation. Chapters 407, 478, and 633 of 1999 permitted power dredging for oysters and authorized DNR to establish oyster sanctuaries by regulation in Calvert, St. Mary's, and Dorchester counties, respectively.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None

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

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