

**Department of Legislative Services**

Maryland General Assembly

2001 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**

**Revised**

House Bill 679 (Delegate W Baker, *et al.*)

Environmental Matters

Economic and Environmental Affairs

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**Natural Resources - Crab Scrapes**

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This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to adopt rules and regulations to prohibit the use of crab scrapes in specified areas.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** DNR could handle the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** DNR may adopt rules and regulations to: (1) restrict catching and possessing any blue crab; (2) provide for the methods by which crabs are taken; (3) close or open any specified area to catch crabs; (4) prohibit or restrict devices used to catch crabs; (5) establish seasons to catch crabs; and (6) establish minimum size limits for hard, soft, and peeler crabs. The regulations may not become effective until DNR first holds public hearings.

Pursuant to current regulations, a person may catch crabs by scrape with the following qualifications:

- the width of the bar of a scrape or a dredge may not exceed 60 inches (five feet);
- a scrape or dredge may not have teeth or projections of any kind;
- a scrape or dredge may not have any flat plate attached to the scraping bar, which is the bar that touches the bottom;
- a scrape or dredge may not have any diver, chain, or other device attached to it or the taking line to hold the scrape or dredge to the bottom; and
- a scrape or dredge may not exceed 80 pounds in weight, including the bag.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal decrease in revenues for some commercial harvesters by prohibiting the use of crab scrapes in specified areas. According to DNR, in recent years an average of six commercial crab scrapers have reported harvesting a total of 15,362 pounds of blue crabs (or an average of 2,560 pounds per harvester) per year by crab scrape in the areas affected by the bill. At an average dockside value of \$1.50 per pound, the average crab scraper receives approximately \$3,840 annually from crab scraping in these areas. Because any harvester affected by the bill could presumably use other gear or harvest in areas not affected by the bill, any decrease in revenues is not anticipated to be significant.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

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

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – February 19, 2001  
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