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By: **Delegates Cane, W. Baker, Boschert, Bozman, Conway, Eckardt,  
Schisler, and Sophocleus**

Introduced and read first time: February 18, 2002

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources - Hard Crabs - Minimum Size Limits**

3 FOR the purpose of prohibiting the Department of Natural Resources from adopting  
4 regulations establishing size limits for hard crabs that are different from  
5 regulations in certain other jurisdictions; and generally relating to the  
6 minimum size limits of hard crabs.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
8 Article - Natural Resources  
9 Section 4-809  
10 Annotated Code of Maryland  
11 (2000 Replacement Volume and 2001 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
13 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article - Natural Resources**

15 4-809.

16 (a) A person may not catch or possess more than 10 hard crabs per bushel or  
17 25 hard crabs per barrel which measure less than 5 inches across the shell from tip to  
18 tip of spike.

19 (b) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a person may  
20 not catch or possess peeler crabs measuring less than 3 inches across the shell from  
21 tip to tip of spike.

22 (2) A person may possess a bycatch of peeler crabs measuring less than 3  
23 inches across the shell from tip to tip of spike if the bycatch is not greater than:

24 (i) 30 per bushel; or

25 (ii) 60 per float.

1           (3)       In determining the number of peelers measuring less than 3 inches  
2 across the shell from tip to tip of the spike, the Department shall select the minimum  
3 number of bushels or floats necessary to be representative of the person's catch.

4       (c)       A person may not catch or possess soft crabs measuring less than three  
5 and one-half inches across the shell from tip to tip of the spike.

6       (d)       In the waters of Worcester County, a person may not catch, possess, or  
7 keep in floats any fat crabs, or any crab known as snot crab, green crab, or buckram  
8 crab.

9       (e)       The minimum size of crabs does not apply to mature female crabs,  
10 identified by the rounded apron.

11       (f)       The provisions of subsection (a) OF THIS SECTION do not apply to crabs  
12 imported into Maryland during the closed season for catching crabs if the person  
13 possessing the imported crabs has a certificate of origin.

14       (g)       Once taken, peelers shall be kept separate from other crabs.

15       (H)       THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT ADOPT BY REGULATION ANY SIZE LIMITS FOR  
16 HARD CRABS THAT ARE DIFFERENT FROM REGULATIONS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS  
17 WHERE THE SAME STOCK OF BLUE CRAB IS HARVESTED.

18       SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take  
19 effect October 1, 2002.