

HOUSE BILL 473

M2

71r2558
CF SB 206

By: **Delegates Elmore, Cane, Eckardt, Haddaway, Mathias, Smigiel, and Walkup**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2007

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Soft Crabs – Bycatch**

3 FOR the purpose of creating a certain exception to the prohibition against possessing a
4 bycatch of undersized soft crabs; and generally relating to catching or
5 possessing soft crabs.

6 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
7 Article – Natural Resources
8 Section 4–809
9 Annotated Code of Maryland
10 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2006 Supplement)

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

13 **Article – Natural Resources**

14 4–809.

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



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

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

6 (i) 30 per bushel; or

7 (ii) 60 per float.

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

11 (c) (1) **[A] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS**
12 **SUBSECTION, A** person may not catch or possess soft crabs measuring less than three
13 and one-half inches across the shell from tip to tip of the spike.

14 (2) **A PERSON MAY POSSESS A BYCATCH OF SOFT CRABS**
15 **MEASURING LESS THAN THREE AND ONE-HALF INCHES ACROSS THE SHELL**
16 **FROM TIP TO TIP OF THE SPIKE IF THE BYCATCH IS NOT GREATER THAN ONE**
17 **UNDERSIZED SOFT CRAB PER DOZEN SOFT CRABS POSSESSED.**

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

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

23 (f) The provisions of subsection (a) do not apply to crabs imported into
24 Maryland during the closed season for catching crabs if the person possessing the
25 imported crabs has a certificate of origin.

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

27 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
28 June 1, 2007.