

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 54

(Delegate Elmore and Queen Anne's County Delegation)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Somerset and Queen Anne's Counties - Authorization to Harvest Seafood and Engage in the Seafood Industry

This bill authorizes the governing bodies of Queen Anne's and Somerset counties to adopt an ordinance, resolution, or regulation or take any other action the governing body considers necessary to authorize a person to engage in specified activities related to the seafood industry and to harvest seafood. Before taking such action, the governing body must hold a public hearing and obtain the written consent of the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to have an impact on State operations or finances.

Local Effect: Queen Anne's County and Somerset County both report that the bill will not significantly affect local finances.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: Chapter 134 of 2004 authorizes the Dorchester County Council to adopt an ordinance, resolution, or regulation or take any other action that the council considers necessary to authorize a person to engage in specified activities related to the seafood

industry and to harvest seafood. Specific statutory authority pertaining to Queen Anne's County and Somerset County does not exist.

Background: According to the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 75 seafood processing plants in the State employ 1,471 people and over 6,600 watermen work the Chesapeake Bay. In 2004, 49.5 million pounds of seafood were landed at a dockside value of over \$49 million.

Small Business Effect: Somerset County is a major seafood processor with three of the county's major employers in the seafood industry. Seafood is also important to the economy of Queen Anne's County. To the extent this bill strengthens the seafood industry in these counties, small businesses would be positively impacted.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: A similar bill was introduced in the 2006 session as HB 94. The bill passed the House of Delegates, received a favorable report from the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and passed second reading in the Senate; however, no further action was taken.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Queen Anne's County, Somerset County, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 1, 2007
ncs/hlb

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