

# SENATE BILL 987

M1, M2

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CF 0lr3169

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By: **Senator Astle**

Introduced and read first time: February 22, 2010

Assigned to: Rules

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Conservation Law Enforcement Act of 2010**

3 FOR the purpose of authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to include  
4 certain recommendations in certain reports and to submit certain reports to the  
5 Governor and the General Assembly; stating certain findings of the General  
6 Assembly; establishing certain responsibilities of the Natural Resources Police  
7 Force; authorizing rather than requiring the Department to audit books of  
8 certain individuals who pack or deal in fish resources; authorizing the  
9 Department to audit the books of certain individuals who sell fish resources at  
10 retail; providing that a certain audit shall be conducted for law enforcement  
11 purposes; authorizing a representative of the Department to inspect a certain  
12 area during a certain inspection; providing a certain penalty for a person who  
13 fails to produce records or permit an inspection under certain circumstances;  
14 establishing that a certain provision of law prohibiting the use of certain  
15 information in a certain manner does not prohibit the use of certain information  
16 for law enforcement purposes; providing a certain penalty for a person who  
17 unlawfully takes oysters in violation of certain bushel limits; providing that a  
18 person who violates certain provisions of law may be required as a condition of  
19 probation or continued licensure to have an electronic monitoring system on  
20 board the person's vessel to allow monitoring by the Department; authorizing  
21 the Department to adopt certain regulations; establishing and providing for a  
22 certain commemorative lifetime hunting license; authorizing the Department to  
23 file a complaint for forfeiture of property unlawfully used to violate certain  
24 provisions of law; providing for a forfeiture conducted under this Act;  
25 encouraging the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission to help promote a  
26 certain public recognition and appreciation of the role of the Natural Resources  
27 Police Force; encouraging the Department to conduct a certain study to identify  
28 certain additional changes to existing law and present certain findings and  
29 recommendations to certain committees by a certain date; requiring the  
30 Department to conduct a certain study of certain funding policies and present  
31 certain findings and recommendations by a certain date; providing that the

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 General Assembly encourages the Governor to increase public awareness and  
2 reliance on the Natural Resources Police Force reserve officers; providing that  
3 the General Assembly encourages the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to  
4 distribute to the Department, for the purposes of conservation law enforcement,  
5 any funds the foundation receives from the United States Department of Justice  
6 as fines or penalties resulting from federal convictions of game violations in the  
7 State; defining a certain term; and generally relating to conservation law  
8 enforcement.

9 BY adding to  
10 Article – Natural Resources  
11 Section 1–107 and 1–201  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
15 Article – Natural Resources  
16 Section 1–201, 1–204, 4–206, 4–1201(f), and 4–1207  
17 Annotated Code of Maryland  
18 (2005 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

19 BY adding to  
20 Article – Natural Resources  
21 Section 10–301.3 and 10–1106.1  
22 Annotated Code of Maryland  
23 (2007 Replacement Volume and 2009 Supplement)

24 Preamble

25 WHEREAS, Maryland envisions a 21st century Chesapeake Bay, where  
26 indigenous fish and wildlife flourish because of a healthy watershed realized through  
27 citizen support; and

28 WHEREAS, The public trust doctrine recognizes that government has an  
29 affirmative duty to protect, manage, and conserve fish and wildlife; and

30 WHEREAS, Prevailing budget constraints resulting from a lingering economic  
31 recession have compromised Maryland’s ability to, among other things, offset the costs  
32 of the enforcement of State conservation laws consistent with the State’s 21st century  
33 vision and the public trust doctrine; and

34 WHEREAS, The intent of this Act is to recognize Maryland’s commitment to  
35 the sustainability of its finite natural resources, with due regard to the dictates of  
36 fiscal practicality, by making conservation law enforcement more effective and  
37 efficient through the provision of additional investigative and funding tools, including  
38 strengthened deterrence of natural resources–related violations; now, therefore,

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

3 **Article – Natural Resources**

4 **1–107.**

5 **IN ANY REPORT ISSUED UNDER THIS TITLE, THE DEPARTMENT MAY:**

6 **(1) INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATUTORY AND**  
7 **BUDGETARY PROPOSALS TO:**

8 **(I) PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF**  
9 **CONSERVING FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE IN THE STATE; AND**

10 **(II) REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLATIONS OF STATE**  
11 **CONSERVATION LAWS; AND**

12 **(2) SUBMIT THE REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR AND, SUBJECT TO §**  
13 **2–1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.**

14 **1–201.**

15 **THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:**

16 **(1) THE CONSUMPTIVE NATURE OF AN EXPANDING POPULATION**  
17 **POSES A CLEAR AND PRESENT THREAT TO THE LONG–TERM VIABILITY OF THE**  
18 **FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE OF THE STATE;**

19 **(2) AN INCREASED UNDERSTANDING BY CITIZENS OF THE**  
20 **INTRINSIC VALUE OF THE FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE OF THE STATE WILL HELP**  
21 **TO ENSURE THE PERPETUATION OF THESE COVETED NATURAL RESOURCES FOR**  
22 **THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS;**

23 **(3) THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROTECTING THE NATURAL**  
24 **RESOURCES OF THE STATE IS VESTED IN THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE**  
25 **FORCE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT;**

26 **(4) BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS ATTRIBUTABLE TO A LINGERING**  
27 **ECONOMIC RECESSION HAVE REDUCED THE NUMBER OF CONSERVATION LAW**  
28 **ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL TO THE MEASURABLE DETRIMENT OF THE**  
29 **NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE STATE;**

1           **(5) ENTRUSTING THE ENFORCEMENT OF STATE CONSERVATION**  
2 **LAWS TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE FORCE, COUPLED WITH**  
3 **INCREASING THE HOMELAND SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATURAL**  
4 **RESOURCES POLICE FORCE, REQUIRES AN INVESTMENT THAT IS**  
5 **COMMENSURATE WITH THE LEVEL OF PROTECTION THE PUBLIC CONSIDERS**  
6 **APPROPRIATE;**

7           **(6) A DIMINISHING ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE ON LAND AND ON**  
8 **THE WATERWAYS CORRELATES TO AN INCREASING NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS OF**  
9 **STATE CONSERVATION LAWS AND AN EROSION OF THE PROTECTIONS**  
10 **AFFORDED TO CITIZENS BY THE PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE, WHICH SETS FORTH**  
11 **THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ADMINISTER, PROTECT,**  
12 **MANAGE, AND CONSERVE FISH AND WILDLIFE; AND**

13           **(7) THE PREVALENCE OF VIOLATIONS OF STATE CONSERVATION**  
14 **LAWS PRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM THAT WARRANTS AN ENHANCED**  
15 **INVESTMENT IN CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT BY:**

16                   **(I) INCREASING THE PRESENCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
17 **POLICE FORCE PERSONNEL ON LAND AND ON THE WATERWAYS THROUGH THE**  
18 **USE OF PRESENT AND FUTURE REVENUE SOURCES; AND**

19                   **(II) ENSURING THAT THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE**  
20 **FORCE IS PROPERLY EQUIPPED WITH THE EQUIPMENT, VEHICLES, AND BOATS**  
21 **NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH ITS STATUTORY MANDATE.**

22 **[1-201.] 1-201.1.**

23           **(A) There is a Natural Resources Police Force in the Department THAT**  
24 **SERVES AS A PUBLIC SAFETY AGENCY WITH STATEWIDE AUTHORITY TO**  
25 **ENFORCE CONSERVATION, BOATING, AND CRIMINAL LAWS.**

26           **(B) THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE**  
27 **FORCE INCLUDE:**

28                   **(1) PROVIDING MARITIME AND RURAL SEARCH AND RESCUE**  
29 **SERVICES;**

30                   **(2) PROVIDING PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HUNTING, BOATING, AND**  
31 **WATER SAFETY;**

32                   **(3) PROVIDING PRIMARY LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES FOR**  
33 **STATE PARKS, STATE FORESTS, WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS, AND PUBLIC**  
34 **LANDS OWNED AND MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT; AND**

1           **(4) SERVING AS THE LEAD AGENCY FOR MARITIME HOMELAND**  
2 **SECURITY ON STATE WATERWAYS.**

3 1–204.

4           (a) In addition to any other powers conferred by this title, the Secretary and  
5 every Natural Resources police officer shall have all the powers conferred upon police  
6 officers of the State. These powers may be exercised anywhere within the State. The  
7 Natural Resources Police Force specifically is charged with enforcing the natural  
8 resource **AND CONSERVATION** laws of the State.

9           (b) Every Natural Resources police officer appointed under § 1–203 of this  
10 subtitle shall perform duties the Secretary designates.

11           (c) Any law enforcement employee of the Department of Natural Resources  
12 who works overtime for any reason, whether or not the employee receives monetary  
13 payment for that overtime work, shall be considered to be employed by this State  
14 during those hours for purposes of all other employee entitlements.

15 4–206.

16           (a) **(1)** The Department [shall] **MAY** audit the books of any person who  
17 packs or deals in fish resources **OR SELLS FISH RESOURCES AT RETAIL** within the  
18 jurisdiction of the Department including [anyone]:

19                           **(I) ANY PERSON** who catches and ships directly to market;  
20 **AND**

21                           **(II) ANY PERSON WHO OWNS OR OPERATES A RETAIL**  
22 **MARKET, RESTAURANT, OR OTHER ESTABLISHMENT WHERE FINFISH OR**  
23 **SHELLFISH ARE SOLD OR SERVED TO ULTIMATE CONSUMERS AND NOT FOR**  
24 **RESALE.**

25           **(2)** [The] **A** Department audit **UNDER THIS SECTION** shall be  
26 conducted to determine the quantity of resources caught and any other data needed for  
27 reporting and accounting to State officials **AND FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
28 **PURPOSES.**

29           (b) **(1)** Every person engaged in the business of packing, **RETAILING**, or  
30 dealing in any fish resource within the Department's jurisdiction shall keep accurate  
31 books, statements, and accounts showing every detail of the business.

32                           **(2)** Every book, statement, and account shall be open for the  
33 Department to inspect at reasonable hours.

1           **(3) DURING THE COURSE OF AN INSPECTION, A REPRESENTATIVE**  
2 **OF THE DEPARTMENT MAY INSPECT ANY AREA OF THE PREMISES WHERE FISH**  
3 **RESOURCES SUBJECT TO THE RECORD KEEPING REQUIREMENTS OF THIS**  
4 **SECTION MAY BE STORED.**

5           **(4) ANY PERSON WHO FAILS TO PRODUCE RECORDS OR ALLOW**  
6 **AN INSPECTION AS REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION IS GUILTY OF A**  
7 **MISDEMEANOR AND ON CONVICTION IS SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT AS PROVIDED**  
8 **IN § 4-1201 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

9           **(C) Every person engaged in the business of packing, RETAILING, or dealing**  
10 **in any fish resource within the Department's jurisdiction shall make any report the**  
11 **Department requires on forms the Department prescribes.**

12           **[(c)] (D) Every person the Department licenses to catch the fish resource**  
13 **shall make any report the Department requires on forms the Department provides.**

14           **[(d)] (E) (1) An officer or employee of any department or unit of the**  
15 **Executive Branch of State government may not divulge or use in any manner**  
16 **information contained in any report submitted pursuant to the provisions of this**  
17 **section that would reveal the income of any person submitting the report.**

18           **(2) This [section] SUBSECTION does not prohibit [the]:**

19                   **(I) THE publication of statistics classified to prevent the**  
20 **identification of particular reports and items of [them or prohibit] THE REPORTS;**

21                   **(II) THE inspection of reports and records by any official or**  
22 **employee of the Executive Branch having a proper interest in them; OR**

23                   **(III) THE USE OF INFORMATION GATHERED IN ACCORDANCE**  
24 **WITH THIS SECTION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PURPOSES.**

25 4-1201.

26           **(f) (1) [In addition to any other applicable penalty set forth in this title,**  
27 **a] A PERSON WHO UNLAWFULLY TAKES OYSTERS IN VIOLATION OF THE BUSHEL**  
28 **LIMITS ESTABLISHED BY LAW IS SUBJECT TO A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,500**  
29 **PER BUSHEL.**

30           **(2) A person who unlawfully takes oysters from a leased oyster**  
31 **bottom, an oyster sanctuary, an oyster reserve, or an area closed to shellfish harvest**  
32 **by the Department of the Environment, when the area is designated and marked by**  
33 **buoys or other signage or the person knew or should have known that taking the**  
34 **oysters from the area was unlawful, is subject to a fine not exceeding \$3,000.**

1           **(3) THE PENALTIES PROVIDED IN THIS SUBSECTION ARE IN**  
2 **ADDITION TO ANY OTHER PENALTY PROVIDED BY THIS TITLE.**

3 4–1207.

4           (a) In addition to any other penalty or fine provided in this title, any person  
5 who is convicted of violating any provision of this title or any regulation adopted under  
6 the authority of this title may [have]:

7           **(1) HAVE** the license under which the person operated in the  
8 commission of **THE** violation suspended or revoked by the court; **AND**

9           **(2) FOR COMMERCIAL CRABBING, FISHING, OR OYSTER**  
10 **HARVESTING IN PROHIBITED AREAS OR DURING PROHIBITED HOURS OR DAYS,**  
11 **BE REQUIRED BY THE COURT AS A CONDITION OF PROBATION, OR BY THE**  
12 **DEPARTMENT AS A CONDITION OF CONTINUED LICENSURE, TO HAVE AN**  
13 **ELECTRONIC MONITORING SYSTEM ON BOARD THE PERSON’S COMMERCIAL**  
14 **VESSEL TO ALLOW THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTINUOUSLY MONITOR THE**  
15 **VESSEL’S LOCATION.**

16           (b) (1) A court may suspend for not more than 1 year a fishing license of a  
17 person who is convicted of violating § 6–402 of the Criminal Law Article while carrying  
18 a fishing rod or net for the purpose of fishing.

19           (2) When a person not holding a fishing license is convicted of  
20 violating § 6–402 of the Criminal Law Article while carrying a fishing rod or net for  
21 the purpose of fishing, the court may order that the person not obtain a fishing license  
22 for a period of not more than 1 year.

23           **(C) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE**  
24 **PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBTITLE.**

25 **10–301.3.**

26           **(A) THERE IS A COMMEMORATIVE LIFETIME HUNTING LICENSE.**

27           **(B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ISSUE A LIMITED NUMBER OF**  
28 **COMMEMORATIVE LIFETIME HUNTING LICENSES TO CERTAIN NONPROFIT**  
29 **ORGANIZATIONS, CONSISTENT WITH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA DEVELOPED BY THE**  
30 **DEPARTMENT, UNTIL DECEMBER 31, 2011.**

31           **(C) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ISSUED HUNTING LICENSES UNDER**  
32 **THIS SECTION MAY, IN COOPERATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT, MARKET AND**  
33 **SELL THE HUNTING LICENSES.**

1           **(D) ALL PROCEEDS FROM SALES OF HUNTING LICENSES UNDER THIS**  
2 **SECTION SHALL BE USED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO FUND CONSERVATION LAW**  
3 **ENFORCEMENT BY THE NATURAL RESOURCES POLICE FORCE.**

4           **(E) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THE**  
5 **PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION.**

6 **10-1106.1.**

7           **(A) IN THIS SECTION, "PROPERTY" INCLUDES:**

8                   **(1) FIREARMS, CROSSBOWS, KNIVES, AND ANY OTHER WEAPONS;**

9                   **(2) AMMUNITION;**

10                   **(3) BINOCULARS, SCOPES, RANGEFINDERS, AND ANY OTHER**  
11 **OPTICAL DEVICES;**

12                   **(4) TREE STANDS AND BLINDS;**

13                   **(5) CAMERAS, SPOTLIGHTS, FLASHLIGHTS, LASERS, AND ANY**  
14 **OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT;**

15                   **(6) VEHICLES;**

16                   **(7) VESSELS; AND**

17                   **(8) ANY OTHER EQUIPMENT USED TO AID IN A VIOLATION OF**  
18 **NATURAL RESOURCES LAW.**

19           **(B) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER PENALTY PROVIDED BY LAW, THE**  
20 **DEPARTMENT MAY FILE A COMPLAINT FOR FORFEITURE OF PROPERTY**  
21 **UNLAWFULLY USED TO VIOLATE A PROVISION OF THIS TITLE REGULATING THE**  
22 **PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE.**

23           **(C) A FORFEITURE OF PROPERTY UNDER THIS SECTION SHALL BE IN**  
24 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES PROVIDED IN §§ 12-304 THROUGH**  
25 **12-308 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ARTICLE.**

26           **(D) ANY PROPERTY FORFEITED UNDER THIS SECTION BECOMES THE**  
27 **PROPERTY OF THE DEPARTMENT FOR DISPOSITION AT THE DISCRETION OF THE**  
28 **DEPARTMENT AS PROVIDED IN § 10-1106 OF THIS SUBTITLE.**



1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
2 encourages the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, under the authority  
3 provided in § 24–205 of the Education Article, to help promote public recognition of  
4 and appreciation for the role of the Natural Resources Police Force in enforcing the  
5 conservation laws of the State.

6 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
7 encourages the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a study to identify  
8 additional changes to existing law that may enable the Natural Resources Police Force  
9 to become more effective and efficient, including a study of the benefits of requiring  
10 the use of technology for the prevention and detection of violations. Any findings and  
11 recommendations shall be presented in a report to the Senate Education, Health, and  
12 Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Environmental Matters Committee  
13 by December 1, 2010, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government Article.

14 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of  
15 Natural Resources, in cooperation with sportsmen’s groups, and any other entities  
16 deemed appropriate by the Department, shall study funding policies that may bolster  
17 the ranks of the Natural Resources Police Force in order to help meet 21st century  
18 demands on conservation law enforcement, including policies by which revenues  
19 realized under this Act may be used to leverage additional revenues from the public  
20 and private sectors. On or before October 1, 2011, the Department shall report its  
21 findings and recommendations, in accordance with § 2–1246 of the State Government  
22 Article, to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and  
23 the House Environmental Matters Committee.

24 SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
25 encourages the Governor to increase public awareness of and reliance on the Natural  
26 Resources Police Force reserve officers, who complement conservation law  
27 enforcement–related responsibilities under the direction of the Superintendent of the  
28 Natural Resources Police Force.

29 SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the General Assembly  
30 encourages the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to distribute to the Department  
31 of Natural Resources, for the purposes of conservation law enforcement, any funds the  
32 foundation receives from the United States Department of Justice as fines or penalties  
33 resulting from federal convictions of game violations in the State.

34 SECTION 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
35 June 1, 2010.