

Chapter 410

(House Bill 601)

AN ACT concerning

**Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing
– Pilot Program and Task Force**

FOR the purpose of establishing the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License Pilot Program to collect certain recreational fishing information and improve compliance with a certain registration requirement; establishing the Task Force on Recreational Fishing Data Collection and Licensing to study and develop multiyear plans for improving the collection and quality of certain recreational fishing data; and generally relating to the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License Pilot Program and the Task Force on Recreational Fishing Data Collection and Licensing.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Natural Resources
Section 4–745(d)(2) and (3)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Natural Resources
Section 4–745.1
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2018 Replacement Volume and 2021 Supplement)

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

Article – Natural Resources

4–745.

(d) (2) (i) The Department may provide by regulation for issuance of an annual special Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license, which when permanently affixed to a boat registered in any state shall authorize any person on the boat to fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay or in its tributaries up to tidal boundaries or in State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays and their tributaries, except that such a license may not be used on a boat that has been hired to take such persons fishing.

(ii) The annual fee for this special license shall be \$50.

(iii) If a boat owner purchases the special license under this paragraph, the boat owner may fish anywhere in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries or the State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays and their tributaries, whether the boat owner is fishing in the owner's boat, in another person's boat, on land, or elsewhere. The Department shall issue a complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to the boat owner who purchases a special license under this paragraph. If a boat to which the special license is affixed has more than one owner, then only the individual applicant who signs the application for the special license shall be entitled to a complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license under this paragraph.

(3) (i) An individual shall register with the Department before fishing in any of the following areas that do not require a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license:

1. A free fishing area established under § 4-214(b)(1) of this title with hook and line;
2. On private real property bordering on tidal water as an owner or tenant of the property, or a spouse or an immediate family member who resides on the property with the owner or tenant; and
3. On a boat licensed under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(ii) There is no fee for registration under this paragraph.

(iii) An individual required to register under this paragraph shall provide all the information requested by the Department.

4-745.1.

(A) IN THIS SECTION, "PILOT PROGRAM" MEANS THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING LICENSE PILOT PROGRAM.

(B) THERE IS A CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING LICENSE PILOT PROGRAM IN THE DEPARTMENT.

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT PROGRAM IS TO:

(1) COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF INDIVIDUALS FISHING UNDER A CONSOLIDATED CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING BOAT LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 4-745(D)(2) OF THIS SUBTITLE;

(2) COLLECT INFORMATION REGARDING THE NUMBER OF TRIPS TAKEN AND FISH CAUGHT AND RELEASED UNDER A CONSOLIDATED CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING BOAT LICENSE; AND

(3) IMPROVE REGISTRATION COMPLIANCE WITH THE FREE REGISTRATION AUTHORIZED UNDER § 4-745(D)(3) OF THIS SUBTITLE.

(D) TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY TO PURCHASE A CONSOLIDATED CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING BOAT LICENSE, THE HOLDER OF THE LICENSE SHALL PROVIDE TO THE DEPARTMENT ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS SECTION.

(E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL TRACK ON A MONTHLY BASIS COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPLEMENTING THE PILOT PROGRAM.

(F) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2023, AND EACH DECEMBER 1 THEREAFTER FOR THE DURATION OF THE PILOT PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS ON EXPECTED FUNDING NEEDED TO GROW AND ESTABLISH THE PILOT PROGRAM AS A PERMANENT PROGRAM TO THE GOVERNOR AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(G) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2023, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY OUT THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) There is a Task Force on Recreational Fishing Data Collection and Licensing.

(b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

(1) at least eight representatives of tidal and nontidal recreational fisheries, designated by the Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission;

(2) one representative of Morgan State University's Patuxent Environmental and Aquatic Research Laboratory (PEARL), designated by the Director of PEARL;

(3) one representative of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES), designated by the President of UMCES;

(4) one representative of St. Mary's College of Maryland, designated by the President of St. Mary's College of Maryland;

(5) one representative of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, designated by the President of the University of Maryland Eastern Shore; and

(6) the following members, appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources:

(i) at least one resource assessment statistician; and

(ii) at least one technical expert on coastal fisheries.

(c) The Secretary of Natural Resources shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

(d) The Department of Natural Resources shall provide staff for the Task Force.

(e) A member of the Task Force:

(1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

(2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) The Task Force shall:

(1) study methods for improving the accuracy of catch and effort estimates in recreational fisheries;

(2) develop a multiyear plan for increasing the frequency of State and regional recreational fisheries surveys that are conducted in a manner that is equitable, inclusive, and statistically valid to all participants, such as online surveys, surveys mailed to a physical address, and telephone surveys;

(3) study methods for improving surveying participants who are not frequently surveyed under current methods, including:

(i) anglers fishing from a private boat on private access points;

(ii) shore-based anglers; and

(iii) anglers for whom English is a second language;

(4) develop a multiyear outreach plan for increasing participation in public and private volunteer angler data capture systems utilized by fisheries managers; and

(5) study additional information that may be collected in recreational surveys to improve fisheries management data, knowledge, or models, such as:

- (i) fish length;
- (ii) fish disposition; and
- (iii) biological data.

(g) On or before December 1, 2022, the Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2022. Section 1 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 5 years and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2027, Section 1 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect. Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2023, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved by the Governor, May 16, 2022.