

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2024 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1232 (Delegate Jacobs, *et al.*)
 Environment and Transportation

Fisheries - Striped Bass or Rockfish - Juvenile Survey

This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to (1) conduct the annual young-of-the-year juvenile survey of striped bass or rockfish at between 12 and 20, inclusive, sampling sites located in the central region of the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay in addition to sampling sites in the northern and southern regions of the Chesapeake Bay and (2) locate the central region sampling sites in any of the following waters of the State: the Magothy River, the Severn River, the Chester River, the South River, the West River, Eastern Bay, or the Miles River. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2024.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,200 in FY 2024 and by \$145,500 in FY 2025. Future year expenditures reflect annual cost increases. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	25,200	145,500	151,100	157,600	164,200
Net Effect	(\$25,200)	(\$145,500)	(\$151,100)	(\$157,600)	(\$164,200)

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: DNR must conduct annually a scientific survey to determine the relative abundance of striped bass or rockfish of approximately 18 inches in length that are in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The survey must be conducted in areas that are used by the department to determine its young-of-the-year index of striped bass or rockfish.

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures increase by \$25,174 in fiscal 2024, which accounts for the bill’s June 1, 2024 effective date, and by \$145,542 in fiscal 2025. This estimate reflects the cost for DNR to hire one natural resources biologist and one natural resources technician to conduct the annual young-of-the-year juvenile survey of striped bass (or rockfish) at additional sampling sites pursuant to the bill. This estimate is based on the following information and assumptions:

- The annual juvenile striped bass survey is currently conducted over the course of July, August, and September each year at 22 permanent sites and an additional 11 auxiliary sites in the northern and southern regions of the Chesapeake Bay.
- DNR indicates that adding survey sites requires a significant amount of additional staff time and work that cannot be absorbed by existing staff. In addition, DNR indicates two staff are needed, to work together, to conduct the survey at each site.
- The estimate assumes two additional full-time staff (one natural resources biologist and one natural resources technician) are hired in order to retain staff that gain experience and expertise from year to year. Costs are less if contractual staff are hired only for a few months of the year when the survey is conducted.
- The estimate assumes the additional staff are hired June 1, 2024 (the bill’s effective date), in order to train the new staff prior to the beginning of the survey in July.
- The estimate assumes the survey is conducted at 12 additional sites and is based on a certain assumption regarding the amount of operating expenses associated with conducting the survey at the additional sites (*e.g.*, fuel, gear) derived from information provided by DNR.

The estimate includes salaries, fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>
Positions (New)	2.0	0.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits	\$12,109	\$136,627
Operating Expenses	<u>13,065</u>	<u>8,915</u>
Total State Expenditures	\$25,174	\$145,542

Future year expenditures reflect salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 711 (Senator Bailey) - Education, Energy, and the Environment.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 25, 2024
js/lgc

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