

HOUSE BILL 889

M2
HB 1232/24 – ENT

5lr1445
CF SB 87

By: **Delegates Jacobs, Adams, Arentz, Chisholm, Ghrist, Hutchinson, T. Morgan, Nawrocki, Otto, Schmidt, and Wivell**

Introduced and read first time: January 30, 2025

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 6, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Fisheries – Striped Bass or Rockfish – Juvenile Survey**

3 FOR the purpose of expanding the scope of the annual young-of-the-year juvenile survey
4 of striped bass or rockfish by requiring the Department of Natural Resources to
5 conduct the survey at at least a certain number of additional sampling sites in the
6 central region of the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay ~~in addition to sampling~~
7 ~~sites in the northern and southern regions of the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake~~
8 ~~Bay; establishing certain requirements for the central region sampling sites; and~~
9 generally relating to striped bass or rockfish.

10 BY repealing ~~and reenacting, with amendments,~~
11 Article – Natural Resources
12 Section 4-746
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

15 BY adding to
16 Article – Natural Resources
17 Section 4-746
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 Article – Natural Resources

2 ~~4-746.~~

3 ~~(A) (1) The Department shall conduct annually a scientific survey to determine~~
 4 ~~the relative abundance of striped bass or rockfish of approximately 18 inches in length that~~
 5 ~~are in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.~~

6 ~~(2) The survey shall be conducted in areas that are used by the Department~~
 7 ~~to determine its young-of-the-year index of striped bass or rockfish.~~

8 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
 9 as follows:

10 Article – Natural Resources

11 4-746.

12 (A) IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 4-215 OF THIS TITLE, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
 13 CONDUCT SCIENTIFIC MONITORING TO COLLECT BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION TO
 14 DETERMINE THE RELATIVE ABUNDANCE OF STRIPED BASS OR ROCKFISH IN AREAS
 15 THROUGHOUT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ITS TIDAL TRIBUTARIES.

16 (B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL:

17 ~~(1) CONDUCT THE ANNUAL YOUNG-OF-THE-YEAR JUVENILE SURVEY~~
 18 ~~OF STRIPED BASS OR ROCKFISH AT BETWEEN 12 AND 20, INCLUSIVE, SAMPLING~~
 19 ~~SITES LOCATED IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE MARYLAND WATERS OF THE~~
 20 ~~CHESAPEAKE BAY IN ADDITION TO SAMPLING SITES IN THE NORTHERN AND~~
 21 ~~SOUTHERN REGIONS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY; AND~~

22 ~~(2) LOCATE THE CENTRAL REGION SAMPLING SITES IN ANY OF THE~~
 23 ~~FOLLOWING WATERS OF THE STATE:~~

24 (1) CONDUCT SAMPLING USING THE SAME OR EQUIVALENT METHODS
 25 AS THE YOUNG-OF-THE-YEAR JUVENILE INDEX SURVEY OF STRIPED BASS OR
 26 ROCKFISH IN AT LEAST TWO SITES LOCATED IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF THE
 27 MARYLAND WATERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ITS TIDAL TRIBUTARIES; AND

28 (2) LOCATE THE CENTRAL REGION SAMPLING SITES IN AREAS OTHER
 29 THAN THE AREAS SAMPLED FOR THE YOUNG-OF-THE-YEAR JUVENILE INDEX
 30 SURVEY OF STRIPED BASS OR ROCKFISH AND IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING WATERS
 31 OF THE STATE:

- 1 (I) THE MAGOTHY RIVER;
- 2 (II) THE SEVERN RIVER;
- 3 (III) THE CHESTER RIVER;
- 4 (IV) THE SOUTH RIVER;
- 5 (V) THE WEST RIVER;
- 6 (VI) EASTERN BAY; ~~OR~~
- 7 (VII) THE MILES RIVER;
- 8 (VIII) THE PATAPSCO RIVER;
- 9 (IX) THE RHODE RIVER; OR
- 10 (X) THE TRED AVON RIVER.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
 12 as follows:

13 Article – Natural Resources

14 4–746.

15 IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 4–215 OF THIS TITLE, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
 16 CONDUCT SCIENTIFIC MONITORING TO COLLECT BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION TO
 17 DETERMINE THE RELATIVE ABUNDANCE OF STRIPED BASS OR ROCKFISH IN AREAS
 18 THROUGHOUT THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND ITS TIDAL TRIBUTARIES.

19 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Department of Natural
 20 Resources shall annually examine the survey data collected under § 4–746(b) of the Natural
 21 Resources Article, as enacted under Section 2 of this Act, to ensure the distribution of
 22 striped bass or rockfish has not shifted from the established sites of the young-of-the-year
 23 juvenile index survey of striped bass or rockfish.

24 SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December 31
 25 each year, the Department of Natural Resources shall report its results from its
 26 examination of the survey data conducted under Section 4 of this Act to the Sport Fisheries
 27 Advisory Commission, the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission, and, in accordance with §
 28 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and
 29 the Environment and the House Environment and Transportation Committee.

1 SECTION 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 3 of this Act shall take
2 effect July 1, 2027.

3 SECTION ~~2~~ 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, except as provided in
4 Section 6 of this Act, this Act shall take effect June 1, 2025. Sections 2, 4, and 5 of this Act
5 shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2027,
6 Sections 2, 4, and 5 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,
7 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.