

# SENATE BILL 960

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EMERGENCY BILL

5lr3456  
CF 5lr3459

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By: **Senator Mautz**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Blue Catfish – Population Control**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing that regulations of the Department of Natural Resources  
4 governing the catching of blue catfish shall establish a certain pilot program, shall  
5 authorize the use of finfish trotlines of up to a certain length, may not set a limit on  
6 the number of hooks used, and shall authorize the use of certain hooks; and generally  
7 relating to blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
9 Article – Natural Resources  
10 Section 4–701.2  
11 Annotated Code of Maryland  
12 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

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

15 **Article – Natural Resources**

16 4–701.2.

17 (a) There is a commercial blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline license.

18 (b) (1) The license authorizes the holder to catch for sale blue and flathead  
19 catfish in the tidal waters of the State using a finfish trotline, as defined in Department  
20 regulations.

21 (2) **(I)** A licensee shall fish in accordance with Department regulations.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1                                   **(II) FOR CATCHING BLUE CATFISH, THE DEPARTMENT'S**  
2 **REGULATIONS:**

3                                   **1. SHALL ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM AUTHORIZING**  
4 **THE USE OF ELECTROFISHING;**

5                                   **2. SHALL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF FINFISH TROT LINES**  
6 **OF UP TO 2,400 FEET IN LENGTH;**

7                                   **3. MAY NOT SET A LIMIT ON THE NUMBER OF HOOKS**  
8 **USED; AND**

9                                   **4. SHALL AUTHORIZE THE USE OF HOOKS THAT ARE NOT**  
10 **CORRODIBLE.**

11           (c) A person who wishes to obtain the license shall complete and submit an  
12 application for the license to the Department or any person designated by the Department.

13           (d) An applicant for the license does not need to hold a tidal fish license under §  
14 4-701 of this subtitle to be eligible for the license.

15           (e) The term of the license is 1 year from September 1 through August 31 the  
16 following year.

17           (f) The annual license fee is \$15.

18           (g) A licensee may not transfer a license issued under this section.

19           (h) A licensee shall have a commercial blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline  
20 license in the licensee's possession when the licensee fishes under the license.

21           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before September 1,  
22 2025, the Department of Agriculture shall issue a report to the General Assembly, in  
23 accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, outlining needs and best  
24 practices for:

25                           (1) collecting harvested blue catfish;

26                           (2) processing harvested blue catfish;

27                           (3) marketing blue catfish to private and government merchants; and

28                           (4) financing these needs and best practices.

29           SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency  
30 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has

1 been passed by a ye and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to  
2 each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is  
3 enacted.