

# HOUSE BILL 1304

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6lr3243

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By: **Delegate R. Long**

Introduced and read first time: February 12, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Fishing Without a License – Enforcement**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to suspend for certain  
4 periods of time the commercial or recreational fishing privileges of certain persons  
5 charged with fishing without a license under certain circumstances; authorizing a  
6 person whose fishing privileges are suspended under this Act to apply for a new  
7 fishing license during the term of suspension; requiring the Department to provide  
8 certain verbal or written notice to certain persons charged with commercially or  
9 recreationally fishing without a license; applying certain provisions of this Act  
10 retroactively; and generally relating to enforcement of violations for fishing without  
11 a license.

12 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
13 Article – Natural Resources  
14 Section 4–604(b), 4–701(a) and (b)(1), and 4–745(a)(1)  
15 Annotated Code of Maryland  
16 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

17 BY adding to  
18 Article – Natural Resources  
19 Section 4–1201(i)  
20 Annotated Code of Maryland  
21 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

24 **Article – Natural Resources**

25 4–604.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) Any person 16 years old or older shall secure an angler's license to fish in the  
2 nontidal waters of the State. An angler's license entitles the holder to fish in the nontidal  
3 waters of the State only during the open season.

4 4-701.

5 (a) Except as provided in §§ 4-701.1 and 4-701.2 of this subtitle, this section  
6 applies to any person who is required under this subtitle or Subtitle 2, 8, 9, or 10 of this  
7 title to be licensed to guide fishing parties or to catch, sell, buy, process, transport, export,  
8 or otherwise deal in fish caught in tidal waters.

9 (b) (1) Except as provided in §§ 4-701.1 and 4-701.2 of this subtitle, the  
10 Department shall utilize a single, commercial license, to be known and designated as a tidal  
11 fish license.

12 4-745.

13 (a) (1) Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d) of this section and § 4-217  
14 of this title, a person may not fish for finfish in the Chesapeake Bay or in its tributaries up  
15 to tidal boundaries or in State waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays  
16 and their tributaries without first obtaining a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing  
17 license or registration issued under subsection (d)(3) of this section and possessing the  
18 license or registration.

19 4-1201.

20 **(I) (1) IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER PENALTY PROVIDED UNDER THIS**  
21 **TITLE, IF A PERSON CHARGED WITH COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONALLY FISHING**  
22 **WITHOUT A LICENSE HELD THE APPROPRIATE COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL**  
23 **FISHING LICENSE IN THE PREVIOUS LICENSE YEAR AND FAILED TO RENEW THE**  
24 **COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL**  
25 **SUSPEND THE PERSON'S COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL FISHING PRIVILEGES, AS**  
26 **APPROPRIATE:**

27 **(I) FOR A FIRST OFFENSE, FOR 1 MONTH;**

28 **(II) FOR A SECOND OFFENSE, FOR 6 MONTHS; AND**

29 **(III) FOR A THIRD OR SUBSEQUENT OFFENSE, FOR 1 YEAR.**

30 **(2) (I) A PERSON WHOSE COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL**  
31 **FISHING PRIVILEGES ARE SUSPENDED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION MAY APPLY FOR A**  
32 **NEW LICENSE DURING THE TERM OF SUSPENSION.**

1                   **(II) IF THE DEPARTMENT ISSUES A NEW LICENSE TO THE**  
2 **PERSON, THAT LICENSE SHALL BE SUBJECT TO ANY REMAINING TIME ON THE**  
3 **SUSPENSION OF THE PERSON’S FISHING PRIVILEGES UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.**

4                   **(3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL PROVIDE AN ORAL OR WRITTEN NOTICE**  
5 **OF THE NATURE OF THE VIOLATION AND OF THE PENALTIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE**  
6 **VIOLATION TO A PERSON WHO IS CHARGED WITH FISHING WITHOUT A COMMERCIAL**  
7 **OR RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE AND FAILED TO RENEW THE APPROPRIATE**  
8 **COMMERCIAL OR RECREATIONAL FISHING LICENSE IN THE PREVIOUS LICENSE**  
9 **YEAR.**

10                   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That § 4–1201(i)(1) and (2) of the  
11 Natural Resources Article, as enacted by this Act, shall be construed to apply retroactively  
12 and shall be applied to and interpreted to affect any person charged with commercially or  
13 recreationally fishing without a license on or after September 1, 2025.

14                   SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
15 1, 2026.