

SENATE BILL 559

M2

6lr2609
CF 6lr3588

By: **Senator Bailey**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 5, 2026

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Recreational ~~Striped Bass Catch~~ Fishery Data Collection**
3 **Program – Reporting Established**

4 FOR the purpose of ~~requiring every person who catches striped bass under a Chesapeake~~
5 ~~Bay and coastal sport fishing license or registration to report the catch to the~~
6 ~~Department of Natural Resources; requiring~~ establishing the Recreational Fishery
7 Data Collection Program in the Department to adopt regulations to carry out this
8 Act, including regulations authorizing certain reporting methods, authorizing a
9 person to report the catch through a mobile application to the maximum extent
10 feasible, and establishing a reporting method that is usable by persons who do not
11 have Internet access of Natural Resources to develop and implement a data collection
12 system for recreational anglers in the State; and generally relating to reporting
13 requirements for the recreational catching of striped bass the Recreational Fishery
14 Data Collection Program.

15 ~~BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,~~
16 ~~Article – Natural Resources~~
17 ~~Section 4-745(a)(1) and (f)~~
18 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~
19 ~~(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

20 ~~BY adding to~~
21 ~~Article – Natural Resources~~
22 ~~Section 4-745(g)~~
23 ~~Annotated Code of Maryland~~

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.



~~(2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)~~

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

(a) In this section, "Program" means the Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program.

(b) On or before December 31, 2026, the Department of Natural Resources shall establish the Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program.

(c) The purpose of the Program is to develop and implement a data collection system for recreational anglers in the State.

(d) In coordination with State and federal partners, the Department of Natural Resources shall:

(1) survey and collect data on recreational fishing reporting programs in other states; and

(2) subject to available funding, enter into a contract for the development and implementation of a data collection system for recreational anglers.

(e) On or before December 31, 2027, the Department of Natural Resources shall report to the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment and the House Environment and Transportation Committee, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on the findings of the Program, including a workplan detailing the proposed development and implementation of a data collection system for recreational anglers.

~~Article Natural Resources~~

~~4-745.~~

~~(a) (1) Except as provided in subsections (c) and (d) of this section and § 4-217 of this title, a person may not 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 without first obtaining a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license or registration issued under subsection (d)(3) of this section and possessing the license or registration.~~

~~(f) Every person licensed under this section shall submit any report the Department requires in accordance with Department regulations.~~

~~(G) (1) EVERY PERSON WHO CATCHES STRIPED BASS UNDER A CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL SPORT FISHING LICENSE OR REGISTRATION SHALL REPORT THE CATCH TO THE DEPARTMENT.~~

1 ~~(2) (i) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO CARRY~~
2 ~~OUT THIS SUBSECTION.~~

3 ~~(ii) REGULATIONS ADOPTED UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL:~~

4 ~~1. AUTHORIZE REPORTING METHODS THAT THE~~
5 ~~DEPARTMENT DETERMINES TO BE FEASIBLE;~~

6 ~~2. TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT FEASIBLE, AUTHORIZE A~~
7 ~~PERSON TO REPORT THE CATCH THROUGH A MOBILE APPLICATION; AND~~

8 ~~3. ESTABLISH A REPORTING METHOD THAT IS USABLE~~
9 ~~BY PERSONS WHO DO NOT HAVE INTERNET ACCESS.~~

10 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
11 ~~January~~ July 1, 2027, 2026. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 6 months
12 and, at the end of December 31, 2027, this Act, with no further action required by the
13 General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Approved:

Governor.

President of the Senate.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.