



Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary  
Charles Glass, Deputy Secretary

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January 29, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan  
Vice Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
2 West Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 257 Fishing Gear - Crab Pots - Ghost Panel Requirement***

Dear Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing the following information on Senate Bill 257. This bill requires the department to regulate ghost panels on crab pots.

The department continues to work with the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission's Blue Crab Industry Advisory Workgroup on issues affecting the commercial crabbing industry including the regulation of crab pots. Discussions on crab pots continue to take place. The department has focused enforcement on recreational crab pot use by continuing to educate riparian homeowners on the use of turtle excluder devices which cut down on mortality in recreational crab pots of turtles and other species. A free registration for riparian homeowners using crab pots has been instituted since 2014. This has been used to educate recreational crab pot users on the use of excluder devices. Additionally, the department continues to work on clarifying requirements for float markers for commercial crab pot lines in order to alleviate potential boater interactions that can cut crab pot lines and result in lost crab pots.

The department participated in a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ghost pot study from 2006 through 2009. The final report of this interagency report recommended continued efforts to alleviate mortality of species related to ghost pots.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources respectfully submits to the Committee the above information relating to Senate Bill 257.

Respectfully submitted,  
James W. McKitrick  
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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