



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

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March 17, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chair, Environmental and Transportation Committee  
251 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein  
Vice Chair, Environmental and Transportation Committee  
251 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

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

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing the following information on Senate Bill 257. This bill would mandate the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission under the department to provide advice and recommendations on lost and abandoned crab pots.

The department regularly works with the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission and its Blue Crab Industry Advisory Workgroup on issues affecting the commercial crabbing industry including the regulation of crab pots. This week, the department - by its own legal discretion - directed the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission to provide advice and recommendations on lost and abandoned crab pots specifically in line with the criteria included in Senate Bill 257. Therefore, the legislation is duplicative.

Rest assured the department remains committed to addressing this challenge. 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 group 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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