

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Education, Health, and
Environmental Affairs Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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March 17, 2020

Senate Bill 257 - Fishing Gear - Lost and Abandoned Crab Pots - Study

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 257, which would study the issue of abandoned or lost crab pots in Maryland waterways.

Because modern crab pots are designed to not corrode in the water, crab pots that are abandoned or lost continue to catch crabs. I understand the concerns of commercial watermen who will see an increase in their operating costs as a result of this legislation. However, I do not see how anyone benefits from marine life dying in these abandoned pots. This reduces the available crab population available for all Marylanders to catch.

As introduced, this bill would have required the Secretary of Natural Resources to adopt regulations to require all crab pots be equipped with "ghost panels" to allow crabs to escape from a crab pot after a period of time if the pot is abandoned or lost. After hearing from Maryland watermen who were concerned about the financial impact this proposal would have on them, the bill has been amended to be a study. As amended, Senate Bill 257 requires the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission to study adverse impacts to fish species and aquatic habitat caused by lost and abandoned crab pots, identify and assess practices and measures that could be implemented or adopted to mitigate the problems associated with lost and abandoned crab pots, and make recommendations for addressing problems associated with lost and abandoned crab pots in the State. The Commission must complete their report by December 31, 2020, which will allow for legislation to be introduced next session based on their findings, if necessary.

This bill passed the Senate 46-0. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 257. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Bailey".

Senator Jack Bailey
District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties