



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

January 14, 2021

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 Support – Senate Bill 343 – Natural Resources – Shrimp Fishery – Licensing and Regulation

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers its full support for Senate Bill 343, our departmental bill.

Senate Bill 343 would affirm the need for a commercial license to commercially harvest shrimp in State waters, establish authority for the department to adopt regulations to manage the emerging shrimp fishery in the State, and allow for the creation and implementation of a pilot program related to the shrimp fishery.

The department has observed an increasing number of shrimp in its coastal biological surveys, as well as received an increasing number of inquiries regarding the rules pertaining to the harvest of shrimp in State waters. Current Maryland law is ambiguous on the licensing requirements necessary to harvest shrimp, and there are currently no rules pertaining to seasons, catch limits, or gear for shrimp since the legislature has not yet granted the department authority to manage the species, nor does the department have a fishery management plan for the species.

The proposed legislation would allow the department the ability to establish regulations for the nascent shrimp fishery in State waters. This would create more certainty within the commercial industry that they are within their legal rights to harvest the species, while ensuring the presence of guardrails to prevent overexploitation. Additionally, the ability to establish and implement a pilot program related to the shrimp fishery would allow the department to test certain management options before enshrining the rules in regulation. This will hopefully result in more certainty in the regulations once they are adopted, given the newness of this fishery to the State.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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