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*The Maryland House of Delegates*  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HJ 1**

**Natural Resources – Fishing – Wild-Caught Blue Catfish**

Chair Healey, Vice Chair Holmes and Members of the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee:

Blue catfish are Maryland's new "snakehead" -- an emerging and fast-growing invasive threat to the Chesapeake Bay's ecology.

Blue catfish rival the threat of snakeheads in that they are predators of most of the Bay's precious species, including blue crabs and oysters.

Blue catfish are ubiquitous in the Bay, recently being found to thrive in every one of the Bay's tributaries.

All that said, they have one weakness: They are delicious.

- Prior to Congressional intervention, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources recognized the looming threat and had great success in building the blue catfish commercial market under the same U.S. Food and Drug Administration processing regime as all other seafood.
- Due to international trade pressure, catfish farmers in the American South pushed Congress to mandate that all species of catfish be processed under a U.S. Department of Agriculture's stricter regime -- the only fish to be so restricted.
- For a number of reasons, the stricter USDA regulation has throttled the blue catfish market, thus reducing the removal of blue catfish from the Bay.
- Our congressional delegation has its hands full in Washington, D.C., to provide regulatory relief for invasive catfish species.
- This joint resolution will make a difference in their advocacy for loosening the processing regulation on this species and helping eliminate this species from the Bay.