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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
SB 537 Department of Natural Resources – Shrimp Fishery Regulations – Clarification
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the distinguished Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee for allowing me to present **Senate Bill 537 Department of Natural Resources – Shrimp Fishery Regulations – Clarification**. This bill is clarifying legislation on the Maryland Department of Natural Resources authority to adopt regulations for shrimp fisheries.

The Maryland General Assembly passed SB343 last session to create a new shrimp fishery, requiring licensing to engage in the fishery and giving the Department of Natural Resources broad authority to develop and manage the fishery. The pilot program was to go into effect last June.

Since the passage of last year's bill, there is a need for clear guidance, specifically, over the parameters and potential conflicts with existing regulations created for other fisheries that did not apply to this new shrimp fishery.

Previously, commercial shrimp harvesting had always been thought to be feasible only in southern waters. However, recent findings have concluded that shrimp are in our Atlantic Coast waters and the harvesting of them will create a new economic boost as well as contribute to local and state revenues.

During current uncertain times with supply chain issues and food shortages, our commercial seafood harvesters consistently provide local, relatively inexpensive, unprocessed, healthy food choices. But watermen are taking a risk when beginning to engage in a new fishery. They deserve our support in making this pilot program a workable, flexible alternative.

Mr. Chair and Vice Chair, I respectfully urge the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members for a favorable report on Senate Bill 537 to further clarify regulations for this new shrimp fishery. Thank you for your kind attention and consideration of this bill.