

SB 455 CBF_SUPPORT.pdf

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Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 455

Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing – Pilot Program and Task Force

Date: March 1, 2022

Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Health, & Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Allison Colden, Sr. Fisheries Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 455 which would develop a pilot program for data collection under the Consolidated Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Boat Fishing License and stand up a Task Force to develop recommendations to improve recreational fisheries data by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

In a recent report on recreational fisheries data focused on Maryland's iconic striped bass fishery, DNR examined the weaknesses and gaps in existing recreational fisheries data collection programs and provided several recommendations for improvement. While MRIP, the coastwide federal recreational fisheries survey, provides accurate data at the coastwide and statewide level, as the Program's data is parsed into two-month "waves" and different fishery sectors, the reliability and accuracy diminish, adding significant uncertainty to management actions at the state level.

One area of significant uncertainty is angler effort – the number of anglers and how many trips each angler takes. Currently, the Consolidated Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Boat Fishing License ('boat license') allows a licensee to carry unlicensed anglers on their vessel. Unlicensed anglers fishing under this boat license are required to complete a free registration. DNR believes that there is a high level of non-compliance with the free registration, which would impact the accuracy of angler effort data. The proposed pilot program would address this suspected data gap by requiring licensees to report number of trips and number of fish caught and released or harvested for all anglers fishing under the boat license.

SB 455 would also create a task force of recreational fishing stakeholders, scientists, and DNR staff to develop recommendations for actions that will further improve recreational fisheries data and subsequent fisheries assessments, including actions that will increase DNR's reach to underrepresented and underserved communities. These recommendations will address key data gaps identified by DNR. SB 455 is a first step to improving accuracy and timeliness of information key to recreational fisheries management.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 455. For more information, please contact Dr. Allison Colden, Maryland Senior Fisheries Scientist at acolden@cbf.org and 443.482.2160.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB455.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

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

Judicial Proceedings Committee



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March 1, 2022

Senate Bill 455 – Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing – Pilot Program and Task Force

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 455 – Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing – Pilot Program and Task Force. This bill establishes a Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License Pilot Program in the Department of Natural Resources. The purpose of the pilot program is to collect contact information and demographic data of individuals fishing under an annual special Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license and information regarding the number of trips taken and fish caught and released under a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license. The pilot program is also intended to improve compliance with a provision that requires individuals who are currently allowed to fish without a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license to register with the Department of Natural Resources.

Under this bill, a license holder must provide to DNR the information requested under the pilot program to maintain eligibility to purchase a Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license. DNR is directed to track costs associated with implementing the pilot program and annually report recommendations on expected funding needed to grow and establish the program as a permanent program. The bill also creates a Task Force on Recreational Fishing Data Collection and Licensing to develop a plan to improve recreational fishing data collection for fisheries management.

In 2014 and then again in 2020, this committee and the full General Assembly passed legislation which directed the Department of Natural Resources to study methods of obtaining more accurate harvest data for the recreational striped bass fishery. These reports did not result in any substantial changes in how this information is collected. This bill is the next step in obtaining the accurate data needed to properly estimate the number of fish, including striped bass, being caught in Maryland to aid those who fish both for commercial and recreational purposes by working towards a sustainable fishery.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 455. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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

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

SB455_CCAMD.pdf

Uploaded by: David Sikorski

Position: FWA

March 1, 2022

To: Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs
Committee

Re: SB 455 – Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational
Fishing – Pilot Program and Task Force

CCA Maryland Position: Support w/ Amendments

As Maryland's largest recreational fishing organization, and a longtime participant in cooperative fisheries management actions in Maryland and beyond, CCA Maryland will support the passage of Senate Bill 455 with the acceptance of the amendments below.

This bill will develop both a pilot program and stakeholder driven task force to take important steps forward in our collective understanding of recreational fishing activities and the sustainable management of our shared natural resources.

Task Force:

This action empowers recreational fishing stakeholders to work with Maryland DNR and academic partners to work as a task force to identify actions that can be taken and funded to improve our understanding of recreational fishing activities and the scientific assessment of our fishery resources.

- Recreational fishing licenses are a core driver in funding to Maryland DNR to manage our shared marine resources.
- Licenses allow Maryland DNR to understand who is fishing so they may survey participants to understand their activities on the water.
- Recreational fishery based data is a very important component of the science based systems to estimate fish populations and ensure sustainable management.
- Current coast-wide survey systems do not provide the level of statistical accuracy needed to better manage our fisheries in a timely and local manner.

Pilot Program:

Supported with the following amendments.

Bold text to be added

Page 3:

(C) THE PURPOSE OF THE PILOT PROGRAM IS TO:

(1) COLLECT CONTACT INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF INDIVIDUALS FISHING UNDER A **CONSOLIDATED** CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL ~~SPORT BOAT~~ FISHING LICENSE ISSUED UNDER § 4-745(D)(2) OF THIS SUBTITLE;

(2) COLLECT INFORMATION REGARDING THE NUMBER OF TRIPS TAKEN AND FISH CAUGHT AND RELEASED UNDER A **CONSOLIDATED** CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL ~~SPORT BOAT~~ FISHING LICENSE; AND

(D) TO MAINTAIN ELIGIBILITY TO PURCHASE A **CONSOLIDATED** CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL ~~SPORT BOAT~~ FISHING LICENSE, THE HOLDER OF THE LICENSE SHALL PROVIDE TO THE DEPARTMENT ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED UNDER SUBSECTION (C) OF 14 THIS SECTION.

If amended,

- The proposed pilot program should be focused on improving the data collection associated with the Consolidated Chesapeake Bay & Coastal Sport Boat License (boat license)
- The proposed pilot program is an example of an action that can be taken now to improve a known knowledge gap in the current licensing structure and an issue with compliance with current reporting requirements.
- The proposed pilot program does not increase any fees on fishery participants.
- The specific purpose of the pilot program as proposed in the legislation:
- To collect demographic data of individuals fishing under a boat license
- Collect information regarding the number of trips taken and fish caught and released under a boat license
- Improve FREE registration compliance under current regulations
- Requiring reporting to obtain the boat license in a subsequent year.

The text below which describes the boat license and FREE registration is taken directly from a Maryland DNR website (https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/service_fishing_license.aspx)

Consolidated Chesapeake Bay & Coastal Sport Boat License allows everyone on board a vessel used for pleasure to fish in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and the state waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic coastal bays and tributaries in lieu of individual licenses. However, these individuals must register with the Department (see below). A special complimentary Bay & Coastal sport fishing license, which includes recreational crabbing, will be issued to the boat owner purchasing this license. The \$50 Chesapeake Bay Sport Fishing Decal is NOT valid as a Recreational Crabbing Boat License (though the purchaser of this decal is given one complimentary individual recreational crabbing license).

FREE Chesapeake Bay & Coastal Sport Registration Unless individually licensed, registration is required for MD. waterfront property owners, those fishing in a designated free fishing area, and passengers on a vessel displaying a Boat License (decal) from MD, VA, or PRFC. In the Potomac River a registration is required for passengers on a vessel displaying a Boat License decal from MD, VA, or PRFC, and for the owner or owner's nonpaying guest fishing from private real property or an attached pier in the tidal waters of the Potomac River.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a FAVORABLE vote on SB 455 if amended. For further discussion regarding this issue, please contact CCA Maryland Executive Director, David Sikorski – (443)621-9186 – david@ccamd.org

SB0455_DNR_LOI_EHEA_3-1-22.pdf

Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: INFO



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

Bill Number: SB 455

Short Title: Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing Pilot Program and Task Force

Department's Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department's Position

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on SB 455.

DNR supports measures that help obtain more accurate harvest data for fisheries such as the recreational striped bass fishery. DNR also supports the concept of initiating a pilot program to acquire that data; however the bill, as currently drafted, does not establish a pilot program. DNR notes that the bill, as drafted, refers to the umbrella term used for all the license types issued under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-745. However other sections of the bill refer to specific licenses. **DNR recommends clarifying which licenses the pilot program would apply to.**

Under the requirements of the bill, DNR will need to develop processes to verify if a license holder has provided all the information required in order to maintain eligibility to purchase a license. DNR's licensing system would need to be updated with these additional checks and balances to allow customers to purchase a license online or through an approved vendor. Regulations will also need to be adopted. **DNR would request the committee's consideration in providing ample time for our department to work through these changes.**

DNR also notes that while new reporting tools can provide critical supplemental information for management, they are not a substitute for scientifically-designed surveys for catch estimation.

For any additional information, please contact our Legislative and Constituent Services Director, Bunky Luffman.