

SB0713_DNR_SUP_EHEA_3-1-22.pdf

Uploaded by: Bunky Luffman

Position: FAV



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

Bill Number: Senate Bill 713

Short Title: Anne Arundel County – Natural Resources – Fishing Gear

Department's Position: Support

Explanation of Department's Position:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on SB 713, which removes restrictions on recreational fishing gear in Anne Arundel County waters and allows for commercial licensees to use archery equipment in those same waters.

Populations of invasive Northern snakeheads have increased in western shore tidal rivers and throughout the Chesapeake Bay. With the increase in those populations, there has been increased interest by both recreational and commercial harvesters to target those fish with archery equipment. Current law restricts fishing in many Anne Arundel County tidal waters to hook and line only, which is a less efficient manner of harvest for snakeheads. By increasing opportunity for harvest, recreational and commercial harvesters may suppress the burgeoning invasive population.

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

Favorable Testimony

Uploaded by: Christopher Warthen

Position: FAV

SB 713
Christopher Warthen
Support

Good afternoon, members of the Senate

My name is Christopher Warthen, my full time job for the past 19 years has been the owner and operator of a successful lawn care business that serves Baltimore and Howard County. When I am not working, I take every moment available to me, with my sons, to spend time on the Chesapeake Bay and it's Estuaries fishing. I've spent thousands of hours on the water over the past 50 years and look forward to many more.

It is an honor testify before you, so that I, along with many others will be able to do what we love for many future generations. I'd like to thank Senator Reilly for inviting me to be here today.

I was born in Baltimore and have lived in Maryland my entire live. As a young child my grandfather introduced me to fishing and I quickly developed a love for it, that has carried though my entire life. As a father I have passed this love on to my children and friends with children. I have spent many of my adult days on the water introducing youth and adults to fishing and crabbing. Mostly fishing for White Perch and Rock Fish. It's crazy how a little fish can put such a big smile on any face.

We have a huge problem in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and it is destroying our echo system. I'm sure at some

point you have heard about the Northern Snake Head fish. This fish was released into a small pond in Crofton Md in 2002. Unfortunately, the pond flooded, and overflowed into a stream that feeds into The Potomac River drainage of the Chesapeake Bay. This was the beginning of our problem. The Snake Head Is like no other fish with its ability to live out of water and move across land. Research shows that “The Snake Head reaches sexual maturity Between one and three years, depending on growing conditions. They can spawn up to five times a year, each time laying as many as fifteen thousand eggs. One Snake Head can lay up to seventy-five thousand eggs in one year”. This invasive species is destroying of fishery. We Must ACT NOW! They eat everything and are clearly eating White Perch, along with other small fish that are so important to our echo system. I had heard about the Snake Head being seen on the Severn River but had never seen them myself, until a couple years ago. This also happen to be when the perch fishing seemed to slow up a bit. Not catching nearly what we had caught in previous years. After seeing the Snake Head, I purchased a Fishing Bow to do my part to help manage this invasive Species that’s destroying our fishery. Sadly, a few days later I learned that it was illegal to use “anything other than Rod hook and line” on the Severn River and a few other Tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. From what I’ve found this is according to Article 4-714 written in 2013 Which state that “Rod, Hook and Line” are the only means allowed to catch fish on selected rivers. I believe this was done to prevent large commercial operations form clouding the recreational water ways with large, long nets and other fishing gear. This was also long before the Snake Head became such a huge a problem. I know some people who Bow Fish for Snake Head and have had a lot of success. Sometimes catching as many as forty in one night on the Severn River.(prior to knowing it was illegal) This is an effective way to help manage this

destructive species before they eat all of the Perch and smaller species, including juvenile Rockfish and soft crabs and many more that have struggled to maintain a healthy population. Catching these fish has been an important way feeding our families over the years. As the Snake Head grow to larger sizes they will eat more and larger prey. I recently saw a video of a man cleaning a Snake head fish. He opened the belly and found an entire duck in the stomach. This could have easily been someone's small dog enjoying a swim. We must act now!

Multi State and Federal funding up to \$138.1 million this year have been invested into *EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program*. *This program is planting streamside buffers, restoring oyster reefs, installing rain gardens, and pursuing the many other projects to reduce pollution that are central to implementing state cleanup plans. Because of this program, the bay's and associated rivers' fish population began coming back to the healthiest levels this state has seen in decades. In addition to the famous "rock fish", we have seen increases in Spanish Maceral, Red Drum, Chain Pickerel, Sea Trout, Blue Fish, Cobia and more. This program is working to clean the bay. Unfortunately, the clean water also helps the invasive species as well. We are aware of the destructive Northern Snake Head, and research would suggest they aren't going away. If we don't take every avenue to control the population, they will completely take over our fishery. WE Must act now before it's too late!*

I'm open to any and all ideas to help manage this invasive, destructive species. Bow fishing is an affordable and effective place to start.

I look forward to one day passing my love of Fishing and spending days on the water to my grandchildren. I need your help to make that happen.

I'm willing and committed to do my part in protecting and preserving our fisheries and water ways from this and other invasive species.

Today I'm asking you do your part and Pass Senate Bill. SB-713.

Thank you for your time.

Christopher Warthen

SB 713_CBF OPPOSE.pdf

Uploaded by: Allison Colden

Position: UNF



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 713

Anne Arundel County – Natural Resources – Fishing Gear

Date: March 1, 2022

Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Allison Colden, Sr. Fisheries Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** SB 713, a bill which would allow for the establishment of commercial fisheries with archery equipment in Anne Arundel County.

Currently, recreational and commercial fishing in Anne Arundel County waters is limited in most areas to hook and line fishing. In some areas, additional gears, including eel pots, minnow traps, small scale seines (less than 50 feet) are permitted. Many of these restrictions apply to areas important for spawning of yellow perch and other species in Anne Arundel County waters.

SB 713 alters the current law by limiting hook and line fishing restrictions to commercial fishers only, while also adding archery equipment to the list of approved commercial fishing gear. This creates significant uncertainty with respect to the permissible gears for use by recreational anglers in Anne Arundel County. By removing recreational restrictions, SB 713 opens up additional gear types to be used in sensitive habitat areas including nets, seines, and archery equipment.

Commercial bowfishing regulations allow for the commercial harvest of any fish species except sharks, lobsters, walleye, striped bass, striped bass hybrids, northern pike, muskies, bass, and snapping turtles. However, any other species of fish could be targeted commercially, even those without a fishery management plan. Expanding commercial fisheries on unregulated species is a significant concern. Without proper data collection and management in place, it is nearly impossible for fisheries managers to know the impact fisheries are having on the target species and the ecosystem.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 713. 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.

SB713 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Pietrowski

Position: UNF

Testimony before the
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
March 1, 2022

Senate Bill 713
Position: **OPPOSE**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

I, Emily Pietrowski, am a high school student in Anne Arundel County and a resident of district 33. I respectfully request an unfavorable report on the Senate Bill 713 from the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Currently, in Anne Arundel County there is a hook and line fishing gear regulation. This regulation protects the finfish in the Chesapeake Bay by not disturbing the underwater habitat and reducing bycatch. SB 713 allows for commercial bowfishing and the use of nets. It also does not specify the meaning of “certain fishing restrictions applicable in certain Anne Arundel County waters apply only to commercial finfish harvesters” which opens the question of what, if any at all, recreational fishing regulations remain in Anne Arundel County.

As a resident of Anne Arundel County, I worry about the safety in waters for people and the impact of fish populations in the Chesapeake Bay that would come from SB 713. Anne Arundel County is a populated area where bowfishing could cause harm to a person, pet, or property. The area that surrounds the water that would be open for bowfishing would pass by homes, schools, and parks. COMAR 08.02.25.05 does restrict a person from shooting archery equipment from any human being, private or public swimming area, international diving flag, occupied duck blind, or another vessel if it does not have another individual using archery equipment. This does not include parks, homes, or schools. As for the impact of fish populations due to SB 713, archery equipment is only restricted on some finfish including shark species, muskellunge and muskellunge hybrids, Northern pike, striped bass hybrids, walleye, and species listed as threatened or endangered under COMAR 08.03.08. This allows all other finfish to be commercially harvested with no other listed regulations.

Additionally, SB 713 is not an accessible bill to the public. It is confusing to the average person due to its wording and lack of explanation on the effects to recreational fishing.

For these reasons, I respectfully recommend an unfavorable report on Senate Bill 713 from the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Sincerely,
Emily Pietrowski