



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

Bill Number: HB 546

Short Title: Pedestrians – Kent Island Drawbridge – Fishing Prohibition

Department's Position: Letter of Information

Explanation of Department's Position:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) provides the following information on HB 546.

This bill will prohibit pedestrians from catching or attempting to catch from or under the Maryland Route 18 drawbridge over Kent Narrows in Queen Anne's County.

Persons fishing from the Kent Narrows Bridge on Maryland Route 18 is a frequent occurrence that potentially endangers the safety of the person fishing from the bridge due to the proximity of passing traffic. Fishing from this bridge also poses a potential hazard to recreational boaters and commercial fishermen passing beneath, as they are occasionally hit by fishing gear being cast from the bridge and have become entangled in abandoned gear left suspended from the bridge. This area has also, historically, experienced a high rate of citizen complaints for closed season, undersized, closed hours and over the limit violations involving striped bass. Maryland Natural Resources Police (NRP) Officers frequently encounter these violations at this location while on patrol and take necessary enforcement action. This bill could potentially reduce the number of violations, thus providing protection of the resource and freeing NRP officers to address other important activity.

HB 546 places the prohibition in the Transportation Article allowing for enforcement by all state and local law enforcement officers, including NRP, because every agency has the ability to write transportation violations. Conversely, if this prohibition was drafted to the Natural Resources Article, only NRP has the means to issue citations.

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