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Committee

Subcommittees
Motor Vehicles and Transportation
Natural Resources, Agriculture,
and Open Space

Joint Committee on Administrative,
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
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HB 601 Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License and Recreational Fishing – Pilot Program and Task Force

Chairman Barve and Members of Environment and Transportation committee,

Today I am presenting HB 601 which is a bill to improve the reporting of data for the recreational catching of striped bass in the State of Maryland. This legislation establishes the Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Sport Fishing License Pilot Program to collect certain recreational fishing information and improve compliance with certain registration requirements. It also establishes a Task Force on Recreational Fishing Data Collection and Licensing to study and develop multiyear plans for improving the collection and quality of certain recreational fishing data.

There are an estimated 750,000 recreational fishermen and women that annually fish in Maryland and the current reporting of catch, disposition and biological data reported is very poor to say the least.

There are currently several methods used to collect data referred to as MRIP. One is [FES] which is a very limited mail survey sent to households along the coast that are members of the Saltwater Anglers registries. The second [AP AIS] is a dockside intercept survey that is used to calculate catch rates. These interviews are very, very limited around the State.

There is also a voluntary anglers survey that is available online. Participation in that program is extremely light as well. In 2014-86 trips reported. 2015-67 trips. 2016-70. 2017-74. 2018-133. 2019 which is the most current information there were 106 trips reported.

In 2014 and 2020, legislation was passed requiring the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a study on methods of obtaining more accurate harvest data for the recreational striped bass fishery. There have not been improvements made for the collection of better data reporting, so the legislation before you makes improvements to obtain more accurate data.