

Date: February 16th , 2022

To: Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: HB 601 – 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 supports House Bill 601.

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

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(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 HB 601 if amended. *For further discussion regarding this issue, please contact CCA Maryland Executive Director, David Sikorski – (443)621-9186 – david@ccamd.org*