

March 2, 2022

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

Re: **House Bill 1149** – Department of Natural Resources – Shrimp Fishery Regulations -
Clarification

CCA Maryland Position: OPPOSE

As anglers and avid users of our natural resources, CCA Maryland members work hard to promote sensible **science-based management measures to support sustainable fisheries for the benefit of the general public** and the long-term health of the Chesapeake Bay.

As waters in the region continue warm and provide favorable conditions for southern species like shrimp, it is important to implement a sound and science-based process for the development of new fishery management plans to guide the use of such resources.

CCA Maryland expects that Maryland's Department of Natural Resources(DNR) intends to use their existing regulatory processes to develop any new fisheries, and recognize this as "enabling legislation" specific to shrimp. Given the value of shrimp as a commercial seafood product, there is no question that if commercial fishers can harvest enough shrimp to develop and maintain markets, then an economically viable fishery will be built and maintained.

Throughout the development of a commercial shrimp fishery, DNR should include the development of suitable rules and regulations to allow for a recreational fishery as well. This will allow for a fair and equitable approach to the use of this expanding resource.

Concerns with gear & by-catch

As DNR develops any shrimp fishery, it is paramount that regulations are implemented which recognize the wasteful impacts of the most widely used shrimp catching gear, a trawl net (fig. 1)

By-catch, also known as discards, are the fish which fishers are required to release due to regulations or are caught by their gear used to target another species. Studies have shown that shrimp fisheries have a 5:1 ratio of by-catch to shrimp and can be much higher depending on prevailing conditions and regulations.

Trawls may also have an impact on submerged aquatic vegetation and other sensitive habitats if permitted for use in any Maryland shrimp fishery.

Capacity & Authority Concerns

Given the broad and generic authority of a DNR pilot program and the many shortfalls of existing fishery management plans, we are concerned with the ability of DNR to develop and manage a shrimp fishery consistent with current state law.

Given the current capacity of DNR to manage existing fisheries, collect relevant data and provide meaningful on water enforcement throughout a broad area, we are concerned that recreational fishery dollars and capacity will continue to be used to manage another commercial fishery.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a UN-FAVORABLE vote on HB 1149 *For further discussion regarding this issue, please contact CCA Maryland Executive Director, David Sikorski – (443)621-9186 – david@ccamd.org*

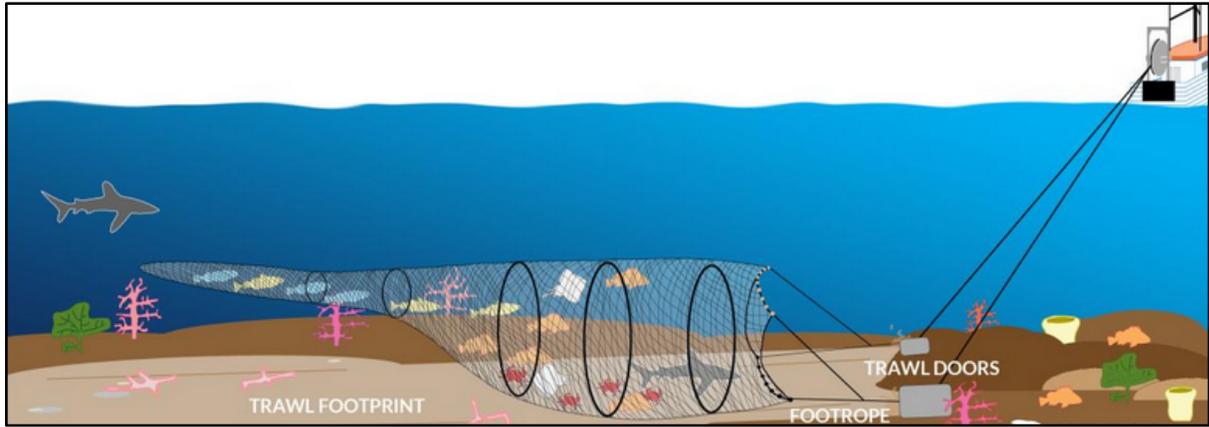


Figure 1: Trawl Net (source: CCA NC)



Figure 2: shrimp trawl bycatch (source: CCA NC)