



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

March 15, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 911 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources - Fishing Licenses and Stamps - Exemptions

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION:

The Department supports Senate Bill 911. Under the bill, the Department will be able to provide fishing access to groups that are using the activity to improve quality of life for certain individuals. The bill would clarify fishing license exemptions criteria. Currently, the department gives out approximately 20 exemption letters per year that cover approximately 800 people. Natural Resources Article, Section 4-217 specifically provides license exemptions for nonprofit organizations to take individuals with physical or mental disabilities and their caretaker fishing. The license exemption authority currently provides for governmental entities and nonprofit organizations to take individuals with physical or mental disabilities who have served in the armed forces of the United States fishing.

The Department supports the bill’s intent to clarify and provide exemptions for groups working with veterans, individuals with mental or physical disabilities, groups providing physical or mental wellness outdoor events (e.g. breast cancer survivor events), groups providing outdoor events for special needs individuals, groups providing educational fishing opportunities under an existing educational permitted activity (e.g. activities authorized under education permits issued under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-212), and underserved communities. Providing a temporary license exemption to these groups also aligns with the Department’s efforts to recruit new anglers to the sport and the goals of the Angler R3 (recruitment, retention, and reactivation) Plan. Individuals who are given a chance to participate in an organized fishing activity are more likely to want to try that activity again. This could lead to a long-term increase in fishing participation and license sales.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

None.

BILL EXPLANATION:

The bill clarifies and adds categories of groups that are eligible for license exemptions under this law.