

SB422_CCAMD.pdf

Uploaded by: David Sikorski

Position: FAV



*Ensuring the health and conservation of our marine resources
and anglers' access to them*

March 8, 2023

To: Honorable Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

**Re: Senate Bill 422 – Natural Resources – Black Bass Conservation Fund –
Establishment.**

CCA Maryland Position: Support

**Coastal Conservation Association(CCA) Maryland requests a FAVORABLE report on
Senate Bill 422**

As Maryland's largest recreational fishing based membership organization, and a longtime participant in cooperative fisheries management, habitat enhancement and the promotion of fishing in Maryland, CCA Maryland supports the establishment of the voluntary donation program which this bill would create.

The Black Bass Conservation Fund would provide the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the ability to process donations made by the public through their online fishing licensing system. The revenue raised through the new fund would be used for stocking black bass, enhancing aquatic habitat, supporting responsible bass tournaments, and supporting scientific research related to conservation of Maryland's black bass resource.

Per the DNR Black Bass Annual Review of 2022, nearly 230,000 licensed anglers classify themselves as Maryland bass anglers. As a widely distributed and popular fish species, black bass, which are more commonly called largemouth bass, currently support highly accessible recreational fisheries on public waterways in every jurisdiction of the state.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a FAVORABLE vote on SB 422. *For further discussion regarding this issue, please contact CCA Maryland Executive Director, David Sikorski – (443)621-9186 – david@ccamd.org*

20230307_SB0422_SUPPORT_Ralowicz.pdf

Uploaded by: Dr. Andrew Ralowicz

Position: FAV

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Dr. Andrew Ralowicz
Maryland Black Bass Advisory Committee
DR_RALOWICZ@yahoo.com 240 888 0087
225 Hutton Street Gaithersburg, MD 20877

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Black Bass Conservation Fund – Establishment

Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment

Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

As a recreational angler and scientist advising the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, I fully support SB0422.

The Black Bass Advisory Committee works to understand the status of Maryland's black bass (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass) freshwater and tidal water populations, makes recommendations regarding fishery population management to MD DNR fishery managers, and reports to Maryland's Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission regarding these matters. Black Bass Advisory Committee members represent everyone from tournament directors and anglers, to professional guides and recreational anglers.

This bill would establish a donation program for black bass, largemouth bass and smallmouth, bass management in Maryland. The Black Bass Conservation Fund would provide MD DNR the legal means to process donations and use the funds for black bass management related to:

- stocking bass
- enhancing aquatic habitat
- supporting responsible bass tournaments, and
- supporting research related to conservation of black bass resource.

This fund's donations would come voluntarily from purchases of an angler's license or Chesapeake Bay Coastal Sports Fishing License in Maryland, and alleviate fiscal pressures on MD DNR resources and black bass management.

As one of the nearly 250,000 bass anglers in Maryland, I strongly support the proposed legislation to establish the Black Bass Conservation Fund and SB0422.

Signed

Andrew E. Ralowicz, Ph.D.
Maryland Black Bass Advisory Committee

Black Bass Glenn.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Glenn Shultz

Position: FAV

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Glenn Shultz

Maryland Black Bass Advisory Committee southmountainblackdog96@gmail.com

301 693 4588

2203 Michael Rd. Myersville, Md. 21773

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Black Bass Conservation Fund – Establishment

Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment

Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

I am a member of the Black Bass Advisory Committee and a Md. Sports Fisheries Advisory Commission member to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. I am also an avid recreational bass angler. I thank Senators Bailey, Elfreth, and McCray and fully support SB 0422.

The Black Bass Advisory Committee works to understand the status of Maryland's black bass (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass) freshwater and tidal water populations, makes recommendations regarding fishery population management to MD DNR fishery managers, and reports to Maryland's Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission regarding these matters. Black Bass Advisory Committee members and their constituents represent the full range of bass black bass anglers, from tournament directors and anglers, to professional guides and recreational anglers.

The bill would establish a donation program for black bass management in Maryland, principally largemouth bass and smallmouth bass. The Black Bass Conservation Fund would provide MD DNR the legal method to process donations and use the funds for black bass management:

- to stock bass
- to enhance aquatic habitat
- to support responsible bass tournaments, and
- to support scientific research related to conservation of black bass resource.

This fund's donations would come voluntarily from sportsmen purchasing an angler's license or Chesapeake Bay Coastal Sports Fishing License in Maryland, thereby alleviating additional fiscal constrictions on MD DNR resources.

The MD DNR would seek the Black Bass Advisory Committee's input to prioritize the fund's use based on the current state of science and interests of Maryland's 200,000+ recreational bass anglers.

In closing, I strongly support the proposed legislation to establish the Black Bass Conservation Fund, and urge the committee to take favorable action on all matters related to SB 0422.

Respectfully submitted

Glenn Shultz

SenatorBailey_FAV_SB422.pdf

Uploaded by: Jack Bailey

Position: FAV

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 401
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410-841-3673 • 301-858-3673
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Hollywood, Maryland 20636
240-309-4238

March 8, 2023

Senate Bill 422 – Natural Resources – Black Bass Conservation Fund – Establishment

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 422, which would establish the Black Bass Conservation Fund in the Department of Natural Resources. This would be funded by a voluntary contribution check off block that would be available when applying for or renewing a fishing license. These funds would be used for black bass management, including for stocking bass, enhancing aquatic habitat, supporting responsible bass tournaments, and supporting scientific research related to black bass conservation.

This concept was brought to my attention by a member of DNR's Black Bass Advisory Committee as one way to support efforts to grow and develop freshwater bass fisheries in Maryland. Funding generated under Senate Bill 422 would allow DNR to expand the number of fisheries that they are able to stock and enhance more aquatic habitat, through the use of reefs as well as through reducing trash accumulation and debris in the water. Increased funding could also ensure continued support of responsible, catch-and-release bass tournaments, particularly ones that encourage these responsible practices among younger anglers. Additionally, this fund could be used to provide additional incentives to anglers to ensure that they report tagged bass that they catch, which is vital to ensure that DNR has the data that they need to monitor the state of Maryland's bass fishery.

All of these are necessary parts of a comprehensive strategy to ensure the continued success of bass in our State, and I am confident that this fund will help to give DNR the additional resources that it needs to undertake these efforts. It is important to note that this fund would be based on voluntary contributions, and DNR advises that they can implement the fund with existing resources.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 422. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey', written over a horizontal line.

Senator Jack Bailey

Support for MD SB422.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Mullin

Position: FAV

March 3, 2023

Senator Brian Feldman
Chair
Education, Energy, and The Environment
Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Cheryl Kagan
Vice Chair
Education, Energy, and The Environment
Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Maryland SB 422

Position: Support

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Kagan:

The undersigned organizations, representing thousands of anglers in Maryland, and tens of thousands nationally, strongly support SB 422, a bill to establish a Black Bass Conservation Fund within the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This new, voluntary funding mechanism will not only benefit one of Maryland's most iconic sportfish species but could also serve as a model for other states for addressing specific fisheries conservation needs.

According to the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, nearly 9.6 million anglers spent 117 million days fishing for black bass (largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, spotted bass, etc.), indicating that black bass are the most sought after and valued freshwater sportfish species in the nation. Black bass are clearly a resource worth investing in, and SB 422 provides an avenue to generate additional resources for restoring and enhancing black bass populations in the state. Through habitat restoration efforts, supplemental stocking to increase or maintain population abundance, assistance with post-release survival following bass tournaments, and additional research opportunities, SB 422 provides an opportunity to address black bass conservation needs across the board.

Recruitment, retention and reactivation of anglers has been a major goal of state agencies across the nation. Through the American System of Conservation Funding, the more anglers we have, the more license dollars and excise taxes on fishing equipment that are available for fisheries conservation. High school bass fishing competitions are one of the fastest growing youth sports in the nation and are more inclusive for students regardless of athletic abilities, compared to traditional high school sports. The excitement and media coverage around high school and college bass fishing tournaments generates interest in fishing for kids and their parents, and providing for healthy bass fisheries and a rewarding fishing experience encourages families to take up fishing as a lifetime recreational hobby.

In closing, we urge the Committee to favorably report SB 422 and ensure the future of one of Maryland's most important fisheries.

Sincerely,

American Catfishing Association

American Sportfishing Association
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Major League Fishing
National Professional Anglers Association
The Bass Federation

Testimony Supporting SB0422 Submitted by Rich Bati

Uploaded by: Richard Batiuk

Position: FAV

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Rich Batiuk

Maryland Black Bass Advisory Committee

richbatiuk@gmail.com 410-507-0785

3123 Starboard Drive, Annapolis, Maryland 21403

SB 0422 SUPPORT

Black Bass Conservation Fund – Establishment

Senate Committee on Education, Energy and Environment

Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan and members of Education, Energy and Environment Committee,

As Vice Chair of the Black Bass Advisory Committee to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, I am fully supportive of SB 0422.

Reporting to Maryland's Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission, the Black Bass Advisory Committee works to understand the status of Maryland's freshwater and tidal water populations of black bass (primarily largemouth and smallmouth bass) and make recommendations regarding Statewide management of these fishery populations to the state fishery managers in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The Committee members represent the broad array of recreational fishers with an interest in black bass, from tournament directors to professional guides to recreational anglers.

The bill would establish a voluntary donation program for black bass management in Maryland, principally largemouth bass and smallmouth bass. The fund, Black Bass Conservation Fund, would provide the legal method for the Maryland Department Natural Resources to process donations made by citizens for use in black bass management. The revenue would be used for stocking bass, enhancing aquatic habitat, supporting responsible bass tournaments, and supporting scientific research related to conservation of the resource. The Department would seek input on the priorities for the use of the revenue from the Black Bass Advisory Committee, representing the interests of Maryland's thousands of recreational bass anglers.

I urge a favorable report on SB 0422.

20230220_SB 0422 SUPPORT.pdf

Uploaded by: Roger Trageser

Position: FAV

SB0422 SUPPORT

Natural Resources - Black Bass Conservation Fund - Establishment.

Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee

I'd like to thank Senators Cory McCray, Sarah Elfreth and Jack Bailey for their support of Senate Bill 0422.

I am a member of the Maryland Sport Fish Advisory Commission, Chairman of the Black Bass Advisory Committee and president of the Maryland Bass Nation.

The Black Bass Advisory Committee works with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to monitor the status of Maryland's black bass freshwater and tidal water populations, make recommendations regarding fishery population management to MD DNR fishery managers, and report to Maryland's Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission regarding these matters. Black Bass Advisory Committee members and their constituents represent the full range of black bass anglers, from the casual recreational angler to the serious tournament participant.

The bill would establish a donation program for black bass management in Maryland. The Black Bass Conservation Fund would provide MD DNR the legal method to process donations and use these funds for;

- Stocking bass
- Enhance aquatic habitat
- Support responsible bass tournaments
- Support scientific research related to conservation of black bass resources

This fund's donations would come voluntarily from sportsmen purchasing an angler's license or Chesapeake Bay Coastal Sports Fishing License in Maryland.

The MD DNR would seek the Black Bass Advisory Committee's input to prioritize the fund's use based on the current state of science and interests of Maryland's 200,000+ recreational bass anglers.

In closing, I strongly support the proposed legislation to establish the Black Bass Conservation Fund and urge the committee to take favorable action on all matters related to SB0422.

Roger Trageser

Conservation Statement.pdf

Uploaded by: Scott Sewell

Position: FAV

Scott A. Sewell
1707 Anne Avenue
Essex, Maryland 21221

I am the Conservation Director of the Maryland Bass Nation. This is a voluntary position that I have held for over 22 years. In my capacity as Conservation Director, I am responsible for working as a liaison with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to ensure mutual cooperation throughout the state in regards to the health and population of largemouth bass in our fishery. I have worked closely with the field personnel from the Fisheries Division performing electro-shock surveys, stocking of young bass, investigating fish kills, and other activities related to fishing.

Today I am asking for your support of HB 0696, DNR- Black Bass Conservation Fund, to add a voluntary checkoff box to the fishing license application and/or renewal. The purpose of this program is to allow fisherman (and fisherwomen) the opportunity to donate money for various programs designed to enhance bass fishing through education, expanding stocking projects, building artificial habitat structure, and other related activities.

I have personally spear-headed a bass stocking program, dubbed the "Upper Bay Bass Stocking Fund". Through the generosity of numerous fishing organizations, local businesses, and many individual contributors, we have been able to purchase hundreds of adult largemouth bass from a DNR approved vendor. We then distribute the bass throughout specific locations of Upper Bay rivers to ensure their viability, and enhance local bass populations. We recently received national recognition in "Bass Times", a widely circulated magazine throughout the United States and Canada.

This program has been proven to be extremely successful, based on catch rates, and testimonials that I have received from many avid fishermen. I can personally attest to the success of our efforts by the quality and numbers of bass that I have caught in the rivers that we have stocked.

I have also spear-headed habitat projects on the Potomac River, as well as the Choptank River on Maryland's Eastern Shore to enhance our beloved fishery.

In conclusion, it is my belief that if we can get this bill enacted, and the voluntary donation box becomes a reality, that we will receive much needed funding to expand our efforts throughout the entire state so that everyone in Maryland will experience a better time fishing for their favorite species of game fish!

Thank you,

Scott Sewell, Conservation Director, Maryland Bass Nation

President, M. R. Bass (Middle River Bass Anglers)

Nitro1707@verizon.net

443-909-9786

SB0422_DNR_SWA_EEE_3-8-23.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Widman

Position: FWA



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

March 8, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 422 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources - Black Bass Conservation Fund - Establishment

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports Senate Bill 422 with amendments. The revenue would be used for stocking black bass, enhancing habitat, supporting conservation during black bass tournaments, and supporting scientific research related to conservation of the resource. Black bass is a generic term that references largemouth bass and smallmouth bass in Maryland as well as other freshwater bass species in North America (but *not* striped bass or black sea bass).

Current stocking projects support the highest quality fisheries but do not produce enough black bass to grow or develop lesser fisheries in Maryland’s portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Stocking may not always be useful for growing a fishery. Habitat enhancement projects like mini reef balls and freshwater reef development can help aggregate existing fish and offer more enjoyable fishing experiences for anglers. Other habitat enhancement projects may include reducing trash accumulation, placement of large woody debris, or planting riparian buffers along stream edges.

The Department currently permits and promotes hundreds of black bass tournaments in Maryland waters. The department has worked even harder to support conservation-minded catch-and-release practices during black bass tournaments. Each year, the department has awarded support for supplies for better handling practices during youth-oriented fishing tournaments. These funds remain extremely limited, contingent on available funding, and thus would greatly benefit from an alternative source of revenue.

Finally, money may also be used to support scientific research related to conservation of the resource. The department has developed an interjurisdictional plan to monitor abundance of black bass on the Potomac River with biologists from Maryland, Washington D.C., Virginia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission. This long-term monitoring project relies on anglers reporting tagged bass.

The Department suggests two technical amendments. The Black Bass Conservation Fund should be added to the list of exempted funds under State Finance and Procurement Article, Section 6-226 as no interest from the fund shall be accrued to the General Fund of the State. This makes it consistent with other special funds for state fisheries.

The Department also suggests that text be added to ensure the State Treasurer invests the money of the fund in the same manner as other state money may be invested and any interest earnings of the

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
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fund shall be credited to the fund. This text is also consistent with existing text in other statutes relating to fisheries funds.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The concept of the fund was recommended by the Department's Black Bass Advisory Committee (BBAC) during its meetings over the past two years.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would establish a voluntary donation program for black bass management. The fund, Black Bass Conservation Fund, would provide the legal method for the department to process donations made by citizens for use in black bass management.

BY:

(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL 422

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 1, in line 6, after “Fund;” insert “requiring interest of the Fund to be credited to the Fund”; and after line 16 insert:

“By repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – State Finance and Procurement

Section 6-226(a)(2)(ii)170. and 171.

Annotated Code of Maryland Department

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

By adding to

Article – State Finance and Procurement

Section 6-226(a)(2)(ii)172.

Annotated Code of Maryland Department

(2021 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

On page 4, at line 1, strike “two” and substitute “**THREE**”; after line 21, insert:

“**(3) INTEREST EARNINGS**”;

in line 23, strike “(3)” and substitute “**(4)**”; after line 24, insert:

“**(G) (1) THE STATE TREASURER SHALL INVEST THE MONEY OF THE FUND IN THE SAME MANNER AS OTHER STATE MONEY MAY BE INVESTED.**

(2) ANY INTEREST EARNINGS OF THE FUND SHALL BE CREDITED TO THE FUND.”;

and in line 25, strike “(G)” and substitute “**(H)**”.

AMENDMENT NO. 3

On page 5, after line 2, insert:

“Article – State Finance and Procurement

6-226.

(a) (2) (ii) The provisions of subparagraph (i) of this paragraph do not apply to the following funds:

170. the Cannabis Public Health Fund; [and]

171. the Community Reinvestment and Repair Fund; AND

172. THE BLACK BASS CONSERVATION FUND”.