

SB 0422 SUPPORT

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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