



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary

January 25, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 80– First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License – Establishment

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

This law was previously in place until July 1, 2022. The intention of the license is to allow greater harvest of blue and flathead catfish by trotline in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries.

These two species are highly invasive and the ability to use increased harvest with effective gears is an important tool in controlling these invasive fish populations. Although both species are considered invasive in the Chesapeake Bay, the threat of blue catfish is particularly concerning because of their increasing populations, rapid range expansion, and capacity to consume significant amounts of native species. This bill allows for an additional method of harvest for commercial harvesters who do not hold specific finfish harvest license authorizations that would allow such harvest. The bill also allows licensees to target invasive species that can cause both ecosystem and, in turn, economic damage.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Natural Resources Article, Section 4-701.2, abrogated on June 30, 2022 (SB 7, 2019). This law created an invasive catfish trotline license for \$15 that could be purchased whether an individual held an existing commercial tidal fish license under 4-701, or held no commercial tidal fish license. The Department had 101 individuals licensed in 2021-2022 under the previous law.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill returns a blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline license for \$15 which can be held by individuals with existing tidal fish licenses under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-701, or those with no commercial tidal fish license. The license would allow commercial harvest and sale of the two species harvested with this gear.

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