

HB 0696 SUPPORT

Natural Resources - Black Bass Conservation Fund - Establishment.

Friday, February 24, 2023 at 1:00pm

Dear Chair Barve, Vice-Chair Stein and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I'd like to thank Delegate Addison for presenting and supporting HB 0696. I am a member of the Maryland Sport Fish Advisory Commission and Chairman of the Black Bass Advisory Committee.

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 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.

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 HB 0696.

Roger Trageser