



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

February 15, 2023

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 63 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Certified Local Farm and Chesapeake Invasive Species Provider Program – Establishment

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports House Bill 63. The Department is working on a variety of programs to control the invasive blue and flathead catfish issue. This bill would provide an additional means for the sale of these invasive species.

While the USDA requirement for inspectors at the point of processing can cause a problematic bottleneck to the sale of wild caught catfish including invasives in Maryland, the Department is continuing to look for opportunities for market-expansion and expanded abilities to harvest these species. This bill would provide an additional tool for the State in the management of certain aquatic nuisance species.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The USDA currently requires inspectors for processing of catfish, including wild caught catfish. As the bill is written, those processors/dealers currently working with inspectors would qualify for the program.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill adds certified seafood dealers that deal in invasive catfish caught in Maryland to an existing Department of Agriculture process for procurement that would allow the harvest of this product to be awarded a certain percentage toward procurement contracts.

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