



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

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January 23, 2024

**BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 152 – First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Fishing Licenses and Stamps - Fee Exemptions - Residents Eligible for Assistance Programs**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

The agency supports the intent of this bill as subsistence fishing is important and understands the financial hardships of citizens participating in these programs. We also appreciate the Sponsor for working with the Department to figure out potential amendments necessary to clarify the intent and lessen the fiscal and operational impact to the Department.

The Department has reached out to North Carolina to discuss how they manage a similar exemption, and based on information received there is about a 10-15% fiscal impact to recreation license revenue.

As referenced above, we are currently working with the sponsor to determine amendments to lessen this impact, and these potential amendments include changing “eligible” to “enrolled” for those who can receive this exemption – and also potentially removing medicaid recipients from those eligible to lessen the fiscal impact on the Agency.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No similar bills have been proposed previously. The agency does issue complimentary licenses to former prisoners of war, 100% service connected disabled American veterans, certain government individuals such as the President of the United States and state governors. Additionally, the state has 25 free fishing areas located throughout the state where fishing licenses are not required. Individuals may fish for free from a boat with a boat license. Individuals may fish for free from their property abutting water. And individuals may fish for free the first two Saturdays in June and July 4th.

**BILL EXPLANATION**

The bill would make recreational fishing licenses free to residents who are recipients of Medicaid, SNAP, WIC, or TANF programs.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)