



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

January 31, 2024

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 237 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Commercial Northern Snakehead License - Gear

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department changes requirements on certain gear on occasion. Without changing the text of Natural Resources Article, Section 4-701.1 to require the licensee to follow gear rules for projectile gear as regulated by the agency, licensees will be held to different rules for the gear. In this case, these are safety rules pertaining to bowfishing.

The snakehead bowfishing commercial license, passed by the General Assembly in 2016, has become very popular. This has led to conflicts between licensees fishing at night with bright lights near dwellings. After much scoping and public discussions, the agency drafted regulations that addressed both sides' concerns and is ready to propose them. Therefore the statute should be changed to refer to the agency's regulations so that all licensees will be required to follow these new safety regulations once they are implemented. The change prescribed by this bill will also help to avoid confusion among bowfishers, prevent enforcement issues, and mitigate continued user conflict.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The snakehead bowfishing license (Natural Resources Article, Section 4-701.1) is a newer type of license, which was passed into law by the General Assembly under Chapters 708 and 709 in 2016.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would require holders of a Northern Snakehead Bowfishing license to follow the Department's gear regulations.

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