



The Senate of Maryland
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Chair: Senator Brian Feldman Vice Chair: Cheryl Kagan
Hearing on Senate Bill 0258 (Natural Resources, Fishing license and Stamp Alterations)

Organization: Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited
Presenter: William (Randy) Dwyer, Chair
Position: Support

To the Chair and Vice Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, members of the full committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

I am Randy Dwyer, and I reside in Senate District 22 and am represented by State Senator Alonzo Washington. As Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited, I am here today representing 4,000 Trout Unlimited members across Maryland.

At the most recent Board of Directors meeting, the Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited reviewed and discussed the proposed license fee increases and voted unanimously to support the fee increases found in SB0258.

As mentioned, the Mid-Atlantic Council and its 4,000 recreational anglers are avid outdoors enthusiasts, and we recognize the funding shortfalls before the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the need to maintain its programs.

The non-tidal fishing license fee has not increased since 2007 (17 years) and the trout stamp fee has not increased since 1992 (32 years). What does this mean to me personally?

As a recent retiree, I've been paying \$5 annually for the last several years. With the proposed fee increases, my future license will be a \$12 annual license plus a \$20 trout stamp for a total of \$32 annually.

This proposed annual fee (\$32) costs less than four (4) McDonald Happy Meals and it is a fee I am more than willing to pay as a retiree. It will also help keep the DNR's Freshwater Fisheries and Hatcheries Division in a strong operational position.

The Mid-Atlantic Council of TU is a conservation organization comprised of multiple local Trout Unlimited chapters across Maryland. This includes Maryland TU, Patapsco Valley TU, Potomac-

Patuxent TU in eastern, southern and central Maryland, Seneca Vally TU, National-Capitol TU in central and northern Maryland, and Youghiogheny TU in the western Maryland panhandle.

As mentioned, taken together our chapters represent 4,000 Trout Unlimited members across the state. These members are avid outdoorsmen and women who come from every walk of life. They volunteer thousands of hours annually in their communities and work on conservation projects along our ocean shorelines, in the Chesapeake Bay, on the Potomac River and in our cold-water rivers and streams found throughout our state.

The Mid-Atlantic Council and our local Trout Unlimited chapters have worked closely with the DNR in the past and will continue to do so in the future to improve cold-water conservation, protection of native and wild trout management and identifying cold-water habitats for protection.

The mission statement of Trout Unlimited is to “Restore, Reconnect and Recover.” We are proud of the work Trout Unlimited has underway throughout Maryland, including the TU “Priority Waters Initiative” in western Maryland to reconnect streams and tributaries, to remove barriers to fish passage and to reintroduce native trout wherever possible. These are projects often done in association with the DNR division of Freshwater Fisheries and we plan to continue this well into the future.

As a conservation organization, this committee must know that Trout Unlimited sees several environmental issues of grave concern on the immediate horizon, including the proposed Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP) which is before the Maryland Public Service Commission and could adversely impact critical environmental areas featuring critical cold-water fisheries. Please note that the Mid-Atlantic Council of TU has voted to oppose the routing path and believe additional studies are appropriate.

In closing, the Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited supports the proposed fees found in Senate Bill 258 and urges its passage by this committee as well as by the full Senate.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to sit before you today.

Randy Dwyer

Chair, Mid-Atlantic Council for Trout Unlimited