

JACK BAILEY
Legislative District 29
Calvert and St. Mary's Counties

Budget & Taxation Committee



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Senate Bill 186 – Commercial Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License – Prohibited Regulations

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 186, which would allow holders of commercial blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline licenses to catch these catfish south of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge.

As I know this committee is aware, invasive fish species pose a substantial threat to our State's ecosystem. As part of our efforts to remove these nonnative species from our waterways, two years ago, we passed legislation to reinstate the Commercial Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License which had been allowed to sunset. However, under present regulations that have been adopted by the Department, these trotlines cannot be used in the Chesapeake Bay south of the Bay Bridge.

The holders of these licenses are a critical part of efforts to remove these harmful species of fish from our waterways. I do not believe that these current restrictions are consistent with the goal of getting as many of these fish out of the water as possible. It is important to note that this bill does not change anything else in the statute creating the license or of any other part of State law. It does not relieve the license holders of their obligation to only catch blue and flathead catfish; this bill simply removes the restrictions on where these catfish can be caught.

I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 186. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey'.

Senator Jack Bailey