Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB0258.

I have a personal connection to the MD DNR Fisheries Div who are currently requesting increases in fishing license fees. I worked for the division for 31 years retiring as the Western Regional Manager in 2005.

The last time the trout stamp fee was adjusted was 1992, 13 years before I retired in 2005. The last time fishing license fees were updated was 2007. Inflation has significantly eroded the buying power of the fees Fisheries Div requires to not only maintain the physical plant of their trout propagation facilities but also the funding they need to properly manage an abundance of trout waters in MD. It's an essential function of Fisheries Div to monitor wild trout populations, identify pollution sources, develop appropriate regulations to protect and enhance MD trout waters, and work to maintain the remarkable trout resources of MD.

A relatively small group of dedicated professionals work hard to meet the challenge. Their work produces environmental benefits but there is also significant economic benefits. For example a study conducted by the environmental consulting company Downstream Strategies in 2010 found that North Branch Potomac River trout fishery produced three million dollars in economic impact annually. That figure is no doubt much greater now because the North Branch supports much more guided float fishing every day of the season by eight professional guides.

Despite a warming climate which adversely impacts coldwater species like trout Md DNR Fisheries staff have contined to expand both wild trout fishing opportunities as well as angling opportunities in urban areas through their trout stocking programs.

The license fee schedule they have proposed was developed through an effort that included MD's trout fishing public. The increases are timely and certainly badly needed to support the efforts of Fisheries Div staff to provide and maintain outstanding trout fishing opportunities in MD.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Ken Pavol