



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

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April 1, 2026

**BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 610 - THIRD READER**

**SHORT TITLE: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES – INVASIVE BLUE CATFISH PILOT PROGRAM – ALTERATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

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The Department supports SB 610 as amended. The bill would require the department to establish a Blue Catfish Gill Net Pilot project as part of the invasive catfish pilot project program that it has created in consultation with the Invasive Catfish Advisory Committee (ICAC). The bill also requires the agency to report out on the program annually and extends the pilot provisions until 2030 to accommodate the timeframe of the pilot project program.

The ICAC made recommendations to the agency about gill net use, and based on those recommendations, the agency has moved forward with creating a pilot project for next year that would seek to obtain more information from gill net users and areas where there is high bycatch with sensitive species versus areas with a high volume of invasive catfish. The bill, as amended, aligns with the work the agency is currently doing.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Under current law, only tidal fish licensees with unlimited finfish harvester licenses or unlimited tidal fish licenses are currently allowed to use gill nets, and only a subgroup of those licensees have striped bass permits, which allow the use of 5- to 7-inch, stretch-mesh gill nets.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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The bill as amended creates a pilot project to examine gill net use for harvesting blue catfish, while also documenting by-catch during the winter gillnet fishery.

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