



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

April 1, 2026

BILL NUMBER: SENATE BILL 559 - THIRD READER

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program Established

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports Senate Bill 559 as amended. The bill, as amended, creates a Recreational Data Collection Program and requires the program to develop and implement a data collection system for recreational anglers in the State. And, in coordination with State and federal partners, survey and collect data on recreational fishing reporting programs in other states, and, subject to available funding, enter into a contract for the development and implementation of a data collection system for recreational anglers. The bill, as amended, also requires the agency to report on the findings of the program on or before December 31, 2027.

The Department’s Fishing and Boating Services work plan for 2026 made recreational fishery reporting a priority. The Department is actively working to create a Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program, including using a position as key staff for that program.

Taking all of the existing recreational fishery data collection into account, while also learning from other state data collection systems, would benefit Maryland in adding to its recreational fishery data collection through new means in the near future, under the work that would be performed by the program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the 2022 session of Maryland’s General Assembly, legislation (House Bill 601/Senate Bill 455) was passed directing the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR; Department) to undertake certain activities designed to improve the collection of recreational fishery data. That data collection is occurring under the MD Outdoors Licensing System.

BILL EXPLANATION

This bill, as amended, creates a Recreational Data Collection Program, tasks that program with researching other states’ systems, developing a data collection system subject to funding, and reporting out on the findings by a certain date.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)