

SB0559_DNR_SUP_ENT_4-1-26.pdf

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Position: FAV



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.

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SB 559 - CBF - FWA - E&T.pdf

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Position: FWA



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 559

Natural Resources - Recreational Fishery Data Collection Program - Established

Date: April 1, 2026

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Allison Colden, Ph.D.,
MD Executive Director

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 559**. SB 559, as amended, requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create a recreational fisheries data program (“Program”) within the Department, survey existing recreational fisheries data collection programs, and, contingent on available funding, implement the Program by December 31, 2027.

SB 559 has been expanded to cover data collection for all recreational fisheries, an improvement that will ensure that the Program will not be so narrowly focused on the striped bass fishery that it cannot be applied in other fisheries in the State. While the 2027 implementation deadline is generous, CBF recognizes that developing the methodology, approach, and data collection platform will be an involved project. That said, recreational fisheries data collection has been the topic of several bills and stakeholder workgroups over the past decade and DNR should have a solid foundation from which to start this work. We encourage this Committee to ensure that this work moves forward in a timely manner consistent with the timeline provided by the bill.

CBF urges the Committee’s FAVORABLE report on SB 559.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.