



Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor  
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

February 10, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve  
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein  
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

***Re: Support with Amendments – House Bill 545 – Natural Resources – Licenses, Permits, Registrations, and Certificates – Digital or Electronic Format***

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The department supports House Bill 545 with amendments. The bill would require the department to issue all licenses, permits, registrations, and certificates electronically. The bill would also require that the individual issued said items could retain possession of their electronic device when showing it to an officer.

Due to the broad application of the bill, there may be significant challenges to its implementation if passed in its current form. For instance, it is unknown what changes would need to be made to the department's COMPASS licensing system (e.g., products not currently available needing to be placed online). Several of the department's commercial products are not yet set up in a way that would allow for electronic issuance. Of biggest concern, would be aquaculture registrations that are currently issued on special security paper to avoid duplication and meet the requirements under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The department supports the bill with amendments introduced by the bill's sponsor to narrow the scope to only recreational hunting and fishing licenses. The amendments would also clarify that the recreational licenses do not need an electronic signature to be valid. This meets the original concern of the bill's sponsor, which is to eliminate the existing confusion for customers and Natural Resources Police over signature requirements when inspecting licenses in the field.

Respectfully submitted,

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