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Budget & Taxation Committee



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Senate Bill 80 – Natural Resources – Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License – Establishment

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to introduce Senate Bill 80 – Natural Resources – Blue and Flathead Catfish Finfish Trotline License – Establishment. This legislation restores provisions of law establishing a commercial blue and flathead catfish finfish trotline license in Maryland.

This license was initially created by an amendment that I sponsored to Senate Bill 7 in 2019. Since its establishment, I have heard from constituents who applied for and used the license to fish for these invasive species. However, during the interim, I heard from one constituent who had reapplied for this license and had been informed by the Department of Natural Resources that it was no longer being offered, because a subsequent amendment to my amendment added a sunset of June 30, 2022 for this license. DNR did not take the necessary action during the last legislative session to introduce legislation to make this program permanent. From my office's discussions with the Department at the time we were made aware of this issue, it appears that allowing these provisions to lapse was inadvertent.

Senate Bill 80 restores the provisions of this section exactly as they were prior to the sunset. Licenses such as the one in this bill are an important part of our State's strategy to fight against invasive species of catfish, and this legislation would ensure that this option continues to be available to Marylanders to assist us in these efforts. It is an emergency bill to ensure that DNR can resume issuing these licenses as soon as possible to reduce the effect that the sunset of the previous law has on our State's ability to reduce the population of blue and flathead catfish.

Senate Bill 7 of 2019, which included these provisions, passed this Committee unanimously and the full Senate 44-0. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 80. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bailey'.

Senator Jack Bailey