



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary

February 17, 2023

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 465 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Natural Resources – Natural Resources - Recreational Crabbing License - Exemption

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The bill would add a specific exemption from recreational crabbing licenses for individuals under the age of 16. These individuals are currently able to harvest without a license up to two dozen male hard crabs.

The Department recommends amended language to clarify the intent of the exemptions so as not to conflict with any other current restrictions within the crab fishery. By amending the text to specify the use of collapsible traps and net rings by this user group, while still requiring the user group to comply with regulations, there is little concern of additional harvest pressure or management conflict. The Department’s suggested amendments were accepted on the cross-filed bill, Senate Bill 102.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under current law and regulation, any individual (regardless of age) can harvest up to two dozen male blue crabs with handlines or dip nets without obtaining a recreational crabbing license. Recreational licensed exempted groups have a lower harvest limit because of the inability of fisheries managers to track harvest pressure from unlicensed individuals.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill, as introduced, provides a license exemption for individuals under the age of 16 to harvest blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries.

Contact: Emily Wilson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services (Acting)
emilyh.wilson@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8426 (office) ♦ 443-223-1176 (cell)