



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

March 22, 2023

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 386 – Third Reader

SHORT TITLE: Certified Local Farm and Fish Program –Establishment

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The Department supports Senate Bill 386 as amended. The Department is working on a variety of programs to control the invasive blue and flathead catfish issue. This bill would provide an additional means for the sale of these invasive species.

While the USDA requirement for inspectors at the point of processing can cause a problematic bottleneck to the sale of wild caught catfish including invasives in Maryland, the Department is continuing to look for opportunities for market-expansion and expanded abilities to harvest these species. This bill would provide an additional tool for the State in the management of certain aquatic nuisance species.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The USDA currently requires inspectors for processing of catfish, including wild caught catfish. As the bill is written, those processors/dealers currently working with inspectors would qualify for the program.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill as amended adds certified seafood dealers that deal in invasive catfish caught in Maryland to an existing Department of Agriculture process for procurement that would allow the harvest of this product to be awarded a certain percentage toward procurement contracts. The bill as amended also requires a report to be issued to the General Assembly by the end of 2023.

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