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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee.

For the record, I am Vice Chair Regina T. Boyce, presenting on **HB512– Fish and Fisheries – Reporting Requirements**

HB512 is a departmental bill that requires certain persons licensed or regulated by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to submit reports as per regulations set by the Secretary of Natural Resources. This legislation codifies the current practice of electronically reporting harvests by commercial fishermen. Incomplete and absent reports hinder DNR from managing fisheries optimally, impacting federal programs such as CARES and federal disaster determinations, as well as reducing available grant funds for fisheries management.

DNR initiated the FACTS electronic reporting system in 2012 for blue crab harvesters and expanded it to include other groups like finfish harvesters, charter captains, and shellfish harvesters. FACTS offers easy access and real-time harvest information through a mobile web application, aiding both captains and fisheries managers.

HB512 encourages accountable and timely reporting, utilizing the FACTS system's 24/7 availability and call center for improved accountability and random verification of reported activity and harvest.

Commercial fishing operations are not immediately required to adopt electronic reporting under this law. Instead, it provides opportunities for affected parties to participate in its implementation. DNR offers extensive resources, including online training, to assist watermen in understanding the state's electronic harvest reporting system.

Effective reporting enables DNR scientists to analyze fishing patterns for informed management decisions and ensures timely actions by holding the Department accountable.

I thank the Committee for their time and consideration in support of **HB512**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Regina T. Boyce".

Regina T. Boyce