

Support HB1664/SB897

Topic: Governor's Blue Catfish Industries Development Fund established.


Bill Patron: Delegate Keith Hodges/Senator Richard Stuart

Reasons to support HB1664/SB897:

1. Blue Catfish are a highly invasive species that prey upon important Bay species such as striped bass, blue crabs, river herring and American shad.
2. Currently only a few seafood processors are processing blue catfish in Virginia due to onerous federal inspection requirements. This bill would help localities attract other processors and provide economic and ecological benefits.
3. Reducing the blue catfish population directly benefits other struggling fisheries such as blue crabs. It boosts the viability of working waterpeople and waterfronts.

Overview:

Governor's Blue Catfish Industries Development Fund established. Creates the Governor's Blue Catfish Industries Development Fund. The bill establishes the Blue Catfish Industries Development Planning Grant Program and the Blue Catfish Flash Freeze Grant Program to encourage efforts by political subdivisions to support the blue catfish industry and the flash freezing of such catfish. Grants and loans will be awarded to such subdivisions to support efforts to attract value-added facilities using blue catfish. Under the program, localities may apply for grants or loans after having established a relationship with a new or expanding business that is expanding blue catfish processing, flash freezing, or value-added facilities using blue catfish.

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