

CHAPTER 500
(House Bill 202)

AN ACT concerning

Department of Natural Resources - Finfishing - Closure of State Waters

FOR the purpose of ~~prohibiting~~ authorizing the Department of Natural Resources ~~from completely closing to close~~ an area of State waters to all finfishing ~~unless~~ if the Department satisfies certain requirements; requiring the Department to publicize in certain ways certain information regarding certain public hearings and to make a certain report available at a certain time; requiring the Department to prepare a certain report at certain times; ~~requiring the Department to reopen a certain area under a certain circumstance~~; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to certain closures of State waters to finfishing.

BY adding to

Article - Natural Resources

Section 4-215.1

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2000 Replacement Volume and 2003 Supplement)

Preamble

WHEREAS, The waters of Maryland are among the State's most renowned resources; and

WHEREAS, ~~Effective assessment, management, and planning in the~~ conservation of Maryland waters are vital tools in the protection of the aquatic environment; and

WHEREAS, There are more than 700,000 Maryland recreational anglers, and recreational fishing is the most popular outdoor sporting activity in the State; and

WHEREAS, Recreational fishing provides more than 11,000 jobs in the State in the retail, wholesale, and manufacturing sectors, and its average annual total economic output is estimated to surpass \$1.06 billion; and

WHEREAS, Commercial fishing contributes an additional estimated economic output of \$100.4 million per year, and 7,600 licensed harvesters, 225 dealers, and more than 2,000 processing jobs rely on the productivity of State waters for their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, These commercial fisheries supply hundreds of local and national restaurants and retail seafood outlets with the high quality seafood for which Maryland is world famous; and