



# CCA

# NEWS

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## **Group Effort Produces Freedom to Fish Law in Maryland**

**ANNAPOLIS, MD** – After months of hard work by a diverse group of interested parties, the Maryland Freedom to Fish Bill was signed into law by Governor Robert L. Ehrlich. A ground-breaking process of cooperation among recreational anglers, commercial fishermen and environmental groups produced a bill outlining common-sense principles for the use of no-fishing zones in state waters.

“The process that produced this bill is really how fisheries should be managed,” said Sherman Baynard, CCA MD board member. “This bill was the result of thoughtful participation by diverse groups like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, World Wildlife Fund, Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen’s Association, CCA and others. Lots of people representing many different interests came together to find some common ground on this issue.”

The original bill, sponsored by Senator Roy Dyson (D-Dist. 29) had eight Senate co-sponsors. An identical companion bill was filed in the House by Delegate George Owings (D-Dist. 27B) and had a broad base of almost 20 co-sponsors. Both Dyson and Owings have consistently supported CCA's efforts to protect the fisheries resources of Maryland.

The new law does not prohibit the use of no-fishing zones as a fisheries management tool, but specifies a list of requirements that must be satisfied in an open public process before such zones can be implemented.

“This hasn’t been an easy road, but the groups involved with this effort were united by a common goal - healthy and productive oceans,” said Baynard. “For all of us who love the water and love to fish, passage of this bill into law is a significant event.”

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