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RECREATIONAL ANGLERS FIGHTING FOR MARYLAND'S MARINE RESOURCES

March 6, 2015

To: Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair;
Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: **House Bill 914**: Nuisance Organisms- Reward For Information
CCA Maryland Position: **FAVORABLE**

CCA Maryland recommends a favorable report from the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee on HB 914.

CCA Maryland fully supports providing DNR and the Natural Resources Police with tools which will aide in the management of nuisance species and enforcing the prohibition of their release. Rewards for the aide of law enforcement are a valuable tool in raising the awareness of the serious problems that nuisance species can cause to Maryland's ecosystems.

The blue catfish is one of many nuisance species that threatens the ecological balance in Maryland's waters and presents DNR with major management issues. Critically, their population has continued to spread throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed at an alarming rate in recent years. Unfortunately, there are individuals and groups known to be actively transporting and releasing this species across Maryland for a variety of reasons. A reward system will support NRP and prosecutorial efforts to make the necessary cases against these wrongdoers and better protect Maryland native fish and wildlife.

Therefore, CCA Maryland strongly encourages the Committee to provide a favorable report for House Bill 914.