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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 0785 Recreational Fishing Licenses – Duration and Expiration

CCA Maryland Position: FAVORABLE

CCA Maryland recommends a favorable report from the House Environmental & Transportation Committee on House Bill 0785 as introduced.

A recreational fishing license is currently valid from Jan 1-Dec 31 of a given year. Changing the valid period to a term of 365 days from the date of purchase provides more “bang for the buck” for anglers. Maryland has seen a decrease in fishing license sales in recent years, and a number of recreational fishing stakeholders have been working on ways to bring more fishermen back to Maryland. This bill does not change the cost of an annual license, but simply increases the value to anglers. It also makes purchasing an annual license more attractive to anglers who visit later in the calendar year, and may encourage anglers to return before their license expires. Virginia already offers a 365 day license, and this bill will make the purchase of a Maryland Tidal license, that is also valid in Virginia, more attractive than anglers buying a Virginia license to fish Maryland waters.

This bill will also streamline the process of licensing for charter boat operators. It will give captains the option of renewing all of the licenses at once, rather than multiple times throughout the year.

The potential for an increase in license sales that this bill promotes will also provide for a positive economic impact to Maryland through increased bait, tackle, fuel, food, hotel, and other tourism and fishing related sales.

For these reasons, CCA Maryland strongly urges the committee provide a favorable report for HB 0785