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HOUSE BILL NO. 291

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 9, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 29.1-508.2, relating to Department of Wildlife Resources; fishing tackle recycling and disposal; educational webpage; report.

Patron—Anderson

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 29.1-508.2 as follows:

§ 29.1-508.2. Fishing tackle recycling and disposal; educational webpage; report.

A. For the purposes of this section, "fishing tackle" means any recreational fishing equipment used to take fish in the inland waters of the Commonwealth and includes fishing line, hooks, floats, lures, or other similar equipment.

B. The Department shall (i) develop, publish, and maintain a dedicated webpage on its website to educate the recreational fishing community and the general public about the importance of responsible recycling and disposal of fishing tackle and (ii) periodically update such webpage to ensure that educational materials are current, relevant, and effective in promoting responsible fishing practices. Such webpage shall include:

1. Clear instructions for fishermen on how to properly remove and dispose of fishing tackle when leaving a fishing area;

2. Educational materials outlining the dangers posed to wildlife when fishing tackle is improperly discarded;

3. Visual aids, including photographs and infographics depicting the negative impacts on waterfowl and other wildlife caused by discarded fishing tackle; and

4. Resources for local recycling programs or designated disposal sites for spent fishing line and other fishing tackle.

C. The Department shall, beginning in 2027 and every three years thereafter, conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the educational webpage required in subsection B and any other Department outreach or community engagement initiatives related to the responsible recycling and disposal of fishing tackle and submit a report summarizing such evaluation to the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources by December 1 of such year.

2. The Department of Wildlife Resources shall publish a dedicated educational webpage on its website to educate the recreational fishing community and the general public about the importance of responsible recycling and disposal of fishing tackle pursuant to § 29.1-508.2 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than January 1, 2027.