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HOUSE BILL NO. 1049

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled January 14, 2026

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 28.2 a section numbered 28.2-412, relating to Marine Resources Commission; Chesapeake Bay; menhaden reduction fishery; quota periods; observers.

Patron—Carr

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 2 of Chapter 4 of Title 28.2 a section numbered 28.2-412 as follows:

§ 28.2-412. Quota period management system for the menhaden reduction fishery; observers.

A. For the purposes of this section, "Bay Cap" means the annual total allowable commercial landings by volume from the Chesapeake Bay by the purse seine menhaden reduction fishery.

B. The Commission shall develop and maintain a quota period management system for the Bay Cap that is designed to ensure that the removal of menhaden from the Chesapeake Bay is more evenly distributed throughout the harvest season and to mitigate the negative impacts of concentrated, high volume menhaden removals from the Bay. In developing such system, the Commission shall limit the Bay Cap to either (i) a maximum monthly quota not to exceed 15 percent of the total annual harvest in a monthly-based system or (ii) a maximum quota not to exceed one-third of the total annual harvest per period in a trimester-based system. The Commission shall not allow any unused or underutilized portion of a quota period to be carried or rolled over into the following quota period.

C. The Commission shall ensure that (i) 10 percent of all trips for the menhaden reduction fishery carry at least one trained observer to document the composition and weight of the actual catch and (ii) such observers report such documentation to the Commission.