

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: HB389

Patron: Askew

Bill Title: Marine Resources Commission; fisheries climate adaptation plan; report.

Bill Summary: Directs the Marine Resources Commission, in collaboration with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, to develop and maintain a fisheries climate adaptation plan that utilizes the best available science to consider climate-driven impacts to Virginia fisheries and aquaculture and identify adaptive management strategies and research needs necessary to safeguard the economic and environmental health of Virginia fisheries. The Commission is directed to convene a technical advisory committee of relevant stakeholders to aid in the development of such plan, to update the plan at least once every three years, and to submit a report detailing the plan to relevant executive agency personnel and committees of the General Assembly by December 1, 2026, for the initial plan and December 1 in any year in which the plan is updated.

Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes, see "Fiscal

Items Impacted: 373
Summary"

Explanation: It is anticipated that the Marine Resources Commission (MRC) will require additional resources to implement the provisions of this bill. See Fiscal Analysis section, below.

Fiscal Summary: According to MRC, the planning, analytical, coordination, and reporting requirements under the provisions of this bill as it pertains to the development and maintenance of a fisheries climate adaptation plan exceed the Commission's existing staffing capacity and technical expertise. It is anticipated that this bill will have a general fund expenditure impact on the Commission. MRC anticipates that it will need an additional Policy and Planning Specialist II position to acquire the technical and subject-matter expertise necessary to develop the fisheries climate adaptation plan required by this bill, as well as address an increase in workload associated with coordinating a technical advisory committee. It is anticipated that any impact to other state agencies associated with participating in the committee can be absorbed within existing resources.

General Fund Expenditure Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
MRC	\$0	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194
TOTAL	\$0	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194	\$128,194

Position Impact:

Agency	FY2026	FY2027	FY2028	FY2029	FY2030	FY2031
MRC	0	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	0	1	1	1	1	1

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Fiscal Analysis: This fiscal impact statement is preliminary, with an anticipated general fund expenditure impact. The fiscal impact statement will be updated as additional information is received.

This bill requires the Commission, in collaboration with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), to develop and maintain a fisheries climate adaptation plan. Paragraph B of § 28.2-208.4, Code of Virginia, would require this fisheries climate adaption plan to include various components, including the impacts of climate change on fish, fish habitats, marine ecosystems, fishery resources, and social communities, identification of knowledge and funding gaps needed for fisheries management bodies, identification of fisheries that may develop or contract as a result of climate change, and a socioeconomic baseline assessment of Virginia fishing industries and social communities. The Commission would be required to update the plan at least once every three years and submit reports detailing the plan to the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, the Chairs of the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, and the Chief Resilience Officer.

According to MRC, the planning, analytical, coordination, and reporting requirements under these provisions exceed the Commission's existing staffing capacity and technical expertise. MRC states that while it routinely incorporates environmental variability into fisheries management, this bill requires the development of a comprehensive, statewide fisheries climate adaptation plan that integrates climate science, ecological impacts, socioeconomic analyses, and community vulnerability assessment across all major fisheries, habitat, and aquaculture sectors. The Commission maintains that it does not currently employ staff with specialized expertise in fisheries economics, climate adaptation planning, or socioeconomic vulnerability assessment at the scale required by this bill. Additionally, the agency states that it cannot absorb the additional workload associated with convening, coordinating, and documenting the work of a large technical advisory committee, which includes meeting facilitation, agenda development, collaboration of scientific and economic information, preparation of draft and final plan documents, coordination with partners, and preparation of required reports and updates.

The agency anticipates needing an additional Policy and Planning Specialist II position for the Commission to have the necessary expertise in fisheries economics, environmental economics, and climate adaptation planning needed to develop and maintain the fisheries climate adaptation plan, as well as assume the increase in workload associated with coordinating a technical advisory committee. Primary responsibilities for this position would include coordinating with partners, organizing and facilitating meetings of the technical advisory committee, coordinating ecological, climate, and socioeconomic information, identifying knowledge and funding gaps, preparing draft and final versions of the adaptation plan and required reports, and ensuring timely updates at least every three years. The position would also evaluate economic impacts to fishing industries and coastal communities, assess community vulnerability, and translate technical findings into policy-relevant recommendations for Commission decision-making and legislative reporting.

The total cost of this position would be \$128,194, including salary, benefits, and non-personnel expenses. MRC also anticipates \$22,000 in additional expenditures for contractual costs for analytical studies, socioeconomic

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evaluations, or additional information required by the technical committee and meeting supplies materials.

The table below reflects MRC's estimate of the general fund annual cost of this position.

Expense	GF Impact
Salary	\$75,000
Fringe Benefits	\$44,876
Vehicle (Pool Car and Pool Car Gas)	\$6,480
Technology Equipment	\$1,838
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$128,194</i>

This bill requires that MRC convene a technical advisory committee, including VIMS, the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Life Sciences and Sustainability, the Virginia Climate Center at George Mason University, and the Institute for Coastal Adaption and Resilience at Old Dominion University to aid in the development of the fisheries climate adaptation plan. It is anticipated that any impact to state agencies associated with participating in the committee can be absorbed within existing resources.

Other: None.