

26105052D

HOUSE BILL NO. 1013

House Amendments in [] - February 9, 2026

A BILL to amend and reenact § 28.2-701 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 28.2 a section numbered 28.2-208.4 relating to Marine Resources Commission; Chesapeake Bay; diamondback terrapin protection areas; use of bycatch reduction devices on crab traps; penalty.

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Delegate Tran

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 28.2-701 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 1 of Chapter 2 of Title 28.2 a section numbered 28.2-208.4 as follows:

§ 28.2-208.4. Diamondback terrapin protection areas in the Chesapeake Bay.

The Commission, in collaboration with the [Crab Management Advisory Committee and the] Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), shall develop and establish diamondback terrapin protection areas in those portions of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries where interactions may occur between diamondback terrapins and any nets, traps, pots, or other fishing devices or gear, including tidal bodies less than 150 feet wide and any nesting areas identified by VIMS.

§ 28.2-701. Crab traps, crab pots and crab pounds; regulations; penalty.

A. The Commission shall promulgate regulations governing the use, placement, and maintenance of crab traps and crab pounds.

B. The Commission may promulgate regulations establishing the mesh size of crab pots and peeler pots. The regulation may provide for the interchangeable use of the two types of pots, provided that each respective gear is appropriately marked and cull rings in conformance with Commission requirements are installed in each pot.

C. The Commission shall require by regulation the use of bycatch reduction devices on all [recreational] crab pots, including such pots exempted from licensing requirements pursuant to § 28.2-226, placed within any diamondback terrapin protection area established by the Commission pursuant to § 28.2-208.4. For the purpose of this subsection, "bycatch reduction device" means a rigid rectangular device, often made of bright orange plastic, fitted to the entrance funnel of a crab pot through which crabs can enter but most terrapins cannot.

D. Any person convicted of violating any provision of a regulation promulgated under this section is guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor.

2. That the Marine Resources Commission, in collaboration with the [Crab Management Advisory Committee and the] Virginia Institute of Marine Science, shall establish diamondback terrapin protection areas in those portions of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries where interactions may occur between diamondback terrapins and any nets, traps, pots, or other fishing devices or gear pursuant to § 28.2-208.4 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, [and determine if additional strategies are needed to reduce bycatch of diamondback terrapin in diamondback terrapin protection areas and shall report any identified strategies to the General Assembly] no later than December 1, 2027.

ENGROSSED

HB1013E