

2000 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 180

Offered January 24, 2000

Recognizing the importance of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to develop the most effective Blue Crab Management Plan.

Patrons—Pollard, Larrabee and Morgan

Referred to Committee on Chesapeake and Its Tributaries

WHEREAS, the blue crab has a higher total ex-vessel price than any other seafood species harvested in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the average dockside harvest of the blue crab during the 1994 - 1998 period was 35 million pounds, with an average dockside value of \$25 million; and

WHEREAS, the collapse of the blue crab fishery would cause economic devastation to a seafood industry already under stress; and

WHEREAS, catches of the blue crab have been greatly depressed during the past several years from the historical average; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Ron Lipcius, blue crab expert with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, reports a 70 percent decline in female reproductive bio-mass in the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, a proper, effective and meaningful management plan for the blue crab should encompass all aspects of the fishery and should ensure the commercial viability of the future of the blue crab; and

WHEREAS, all segments of the seafood industry recognize the many stresses on the blue crab and the need for a management plan that ensures the commercial viability of the blue crab fishery; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has delegated the authority of blue crab management to the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) because of the complex nature of the fishery and because of the agency's relationships with scientists and watermen who understand the resource best; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly recognizes the importance of the Virginia Marine Resources Commission to develop the most effective Blue Crab Management Plan; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That VMRC keep the General Assembly apprised of ways in which it may assist or provide additional resources for the management of the Chesapeake Bay blue crab.

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