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## SENATE BILL NO. 621

Offered January 24, 2000

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 28.2-705.1, relating to the protection of certain female crabs; penalties.*

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Patron—Barry

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Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:****1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 28.2-705.1 as follows:**

§ 28.2-705.1. *Restriction on catching, possessing, or purchasing female crabs; exceptions.*

A. *It is unlawful for any person to catch, hold, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, or purchase any female crab bearing eggs visible thereon or any female crab from which the egg pouch or sponge has been removed.*

B. *It shall not be a violation of subsection A of this section if a legally registered commercial fisherman (i) immediately returns such crabs to the water while the crabs are still alive or (ii) does not have more than two percent of the total number of crabs in his workbox in the berry state.*

C. *For the purposes of this section:*

*"Workbox" means a container used for culling the catch.*

*"Berry" means any female crab whose eggs are extruded on its abdomen.*

D. *Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 4 misdemeanor. A second violation of this section shall be a Class 3 misdemeanor, and the person's registration as a commercial fisherman shall be suspended for ten days. A third or subsequent violation of this section shall be a Class 2 misdemeanor, and the person's registration as a commercial fisherman shall be suspended for thirty days. Any person whose registration has been suspended shall remove all of his traps from the water no later than ten days after the first day of his suspension.*

**2. That the provisions of this act shall expire on July 1, 2002.**

INTRODUCED

SB621