

## 2007 SESSION

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### HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 650

*Requesting the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to continue its study on abandoned and discarded crab traps. Report.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2007

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 2007

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth of Virginia recognizes the significance of the blue crab fishery to the economic and environmental health of the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, the abundance of blue crabs in the Bay remains at historic low levels and in an effort to restore the fishery, the Commonwealth and the State of Maryland have adopted a Baywide goal to reduce the harvest of blue crabs and double the size of the blue crab spawning stock; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Bi-State Blue Crab Technical Advisory Committee August 2006 Report states that the blue crab's "relatively low stock levels continue to create a risk of recruitment failure," suggesting an uncertain future for the fishery; and

WHEREAS, recent studies by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science indicate the presence of thousands of abandoned or discarded crab traps that litter the bottom of the Bay and may take years to disintegrate if left in the waters of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, these derelict crab traps continue to catch and kill potentially hundreds of thousands of blue crabs and other fish species every year, exerting significant fishing pressure on the overall abundance of blue crabs in the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth currently does not have a strategy for managing or mitigating this potential additional fishing pressure on the blue crab population; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Center for Coastal Resources Management at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science be requested to continue its study on abandoned and discarded crab traps. In conducting its study, the Center for Coastal Resources Management shall assess the scope of the derelict blue crab trap issue, consider and recommend marking requirements for crab traps that will minimize the destruction of crab traps and their markers, and work with appropriate state and federal agencies to identify potential mitigation options. The study shall recommend a strategy for managing abandoned and discarded crab traps.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Center for Coastal Resources Management for this study, upon request.

The Center for Coastal Resources Management shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2007, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2008 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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