

# 2024 SESSION

INTRODUCED

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## HOUSE BILL NO. 1135

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 10, 2024

*A BILL to direct the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to convene a work group related to blue catfish; report.*

Patrons—Hodges, Cole and Simonds; Senator: Stuart

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

### **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. § 1.** *That the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (the Department), in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center, the Marine Products Board, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Virginia Waterman's Association, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Travel Association, current and prospective blue catfish processors, Friends of the Rappahannock, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and other state agencies or stakeholders deemed necessary by the Department, shall convene a work group to evaluate strategies to reduce the negative ecological effects of blue catfish and to increase the sales and marketing of blue catfish. The work group shall (i) review past and ongoing efforts to promote the creation of a market for blue catfish, (ii) identify and explore potential sectors for the blue catfish market, and (iii) identify any actions that the Commonwealth can take to promote and expand the market for blue catfish. The Department shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor, the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Chairmen of the Senate Committees on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources and Finance and Appropriations and the House Committees on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources and Appropriations by December 1, 2024.*

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HB1135