

## 1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 28.2-203.1, relating to crab*  
3 *fishery management plans.*

4 [S 908]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**7 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 28.2-203.1 as follows:**8 *§ 28.2-203.1. Blue crab fishery management plan.*

9 *A. The Commission shall prepare, in consultation with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, other*  
10 *educational institutions and representatives of industry and interested parties, and then implement a blue*  
11 *crab fishery management plan. The plan shall build upon previously developed plans, including*  
12 *consideration of plans adopted by the multi-state Chesapeake Bay Program, and shall be consistent with*  
13 *the standards for fishery conservation and management set out in § 28.2-203. The plan shall be*  
14 *designed to reverse any fishing practices, environmental stress and habitat deterioration negatively*  
15 *impacting the short and long term viability and sustainability of the crab stock in Virginia waters. The*  
16 *Commission shall consider the economic impact to Virginia of proposed legislative and regulatory*  
17 *changes. The protection of spawning stock, nursery areas and habitat shall be of prime consideration in*  
18 *the plan. At a minimum the plan shall include, but not be limited to:*

19 *1. Measures to protect and enhance crab habitat and nursery areas.*

20 *2. Suggested measures to assure water quality conditions necessary for blue crab survival and*  
21 *reproduction, including identification of areas where water quality is such that onshore mechanisms for*  
22 *water quality protection are needed to protect and restore crab populations and habitat areas.*

23 *3. A review of current and proposed regulations and restrictions relating to: (i) winter dredging; (ii)*  
24 *commercial licensing; (iii) spawning stock; (iv) nursing sanctuaries; (v) submerged aquatic vegetation;*  
25 *(vi) peeler and soft shell crabs; (vii) size limits; (viii) the use of cull rings and the use of crab pots; and*  
26 *(ix) time of day restrictions and closed seasons.*

27 *4. Recommended legislative changes if necessary to implement the plan.*

28 *B. The Commission shall, on or before December 1 of each year, report to the Governor and the*  
29 *General Assembly on the progress and implementation of the blue crab fisheries management plan.*

ENROLLED

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