



Rhode Island
**SALTWATER
ANGLERS**
Association



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March 4, 2024

Chairman Bennett and House Committee on Natural Resources

Via email: HouseEnvironmentandNaturalResources@rilegislature.gov

RE: Support for H7440

Dear Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Saltwater Anglers Association (RISAA), representing over 7500 recreational anglers in Southeastern New England is proud to support H7440. We agree with the idea of returning regulation of marine fisheries including blue claw crabs as in this instance to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. This Bill will do that by removing a legislative prohibition of fishing for blue claw crabs at night.

It is common to go out at night to catch blue claw crabs and our neighboring states allow such activity. This legislative restriction has been law for many years, but in our estimation places an unneeded restriction on individuals who would like to catch a few blue claw crabs for a meal. If H 7440 passes, then DEM may consider opening nighttime harvest of blue crabs if they assess that the change is warranted. Currently, one of the ten Principal Marine Biologists at the DEM Marine Fisheries Division monitors the status of the blue crab population, evaluates interannual harvest for the species and evaluates the scientific survey data.

At RISAA we remain concerned about how the recreational fishing community is controlled by law and regulations. We understand that it is important to properly manage the public resource, however we believe that regulatory control should be in the hands of biologists and fisheries managers at the RIDEM.

Thank you for all of the work that you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rich Hitt".

Richard Hittinger, 1st Vice President

Scott A. Travers

Scott Travers, Executive Director