



**House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources**

**February 29, 2024**

**H 7440 An Act Relating to Fish & Wildlife – Lobsters and Other Crustaceans**

Sponsors: Reps. Boylan, Cotter, Bennett, Chippendale, Edwards, Handy, Cortvriend, Carson, Knight, McGaw

**Topher Hamblett, Executive Director**

**Testimony in Support**

Save The Bay thanks Rep. Boylan and her co-sponsors for introducing H 7440, which addresses an impractical and unfair policy of prohibiting the harvesting of blue crabs between sundown and sunup.

The existing prohibition against nighttime harvesting of blue crabs is impractical and unfair. There are no such prohibitions against catching finfish at night. Many Rhode Islanders, and communities within Rhode Island, are subsistence harvesters of blue crabs. People who work daytime shifts and need to fish at night should not be prevented from doing so.

While considering this bill, we also urge this committee to consider whether DEM has the resources it needs to effectively monitor the blue crab fishery and enforce its regulations, the purpose of which is to protect the species and the people who depend on them.

Save The Bay believes that the General Assembly should set environmental policy, and that creation of regulations to implement policies should rest with the state agencies. By removing the provision in law that prohibits nighttime harvesting of blue crabs, the General Assembly is properly placing responsibility for regulations in the hands of the Department of Environmental Management and the experts on its staff. This will enable DEM to make sound management decisions to help ensure the sustainable harvest of blue crabs.

Thank you for considering Save The Bay's testimony on H 7440.