

WHEREAS, Excessive development occurring north of the spring may have a detrimental effect on the groundwater supply serving the hatchery; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That effects of residential and/or other development in the Beaver Creek Valley north of the Albert M. Powell Trout Hatchery and report to the General Assembly not later than January 1974, recommending for the guidance of the State and local government measures which will mitigate adverse effects; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Governor of Maryland and the Secretary of Natural Resources.

Approved May 7, 1973.

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No. 30

(Senate Joint Resolution 2)

Senate Joint Resolution requesting the Department of Natural Resources and its appropriate agencies to conduct a research program to study the blue crab.

WHEREAS, Thousands of Marylanders annually enjoy one of the most delicious of all seafood indigenous to Maryland - the blue crab in all the many ways it can be prepared; and

WHEREAS, However, for a period of at least five years, the crab population of the State has fallen far below the predictions of expert marine biologists; and

WHEREAS, While some years are better than others, the records show that the crab population has declined to a point from which it is unable to recover. Crab production in Maryland dropped from 24.5 million pounds in 1967 to 8.6 million pounds in 1968. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science predicted that the shortage would end by August, 1969, but the 1968 and 1969 production of crabs fell to less than one-half of the former level. Experts from the Department of Natural Resources, the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science claimed that the summer of 1970 would be a bumper crab crop season, but crabs that year remained scarce, and both Maryland and Virginia crab houses reported getting only 8 to 10 pounds of meat per hundred pounds of live crabs, instead of the usual 14 pounds, thus representing a 30 to 40 per cent reduction. From September, 1970, through August, 1971, there was yet another crab shortage; and

WHEREAS, Once again the experts forecast crab catches of 75 million pounds a year for the next two years. In view of past predictions which have never materialized, the new forecast for crab catches is certainly questionable; and

WHEREAS, At the present time, there is far too much still remaining unknown about the habits, patterns, life cycle of the blue crab. Without this knowledge, Maryland is powerless to control crab production or to discover conditions that contribute to its decline; and

WHEREAS, A research program relating to the blue crab is very much in need; and it would be a prudent investment and one Maryland should feel compelled to make in order to protect a 15 million dollar annual industry; now,