

May 22, 1997

The Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr.
Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
101 State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis MD 21401-1991

Dear Speaker Taylor:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I today vetoed House Bill 672 – Natural Resources – Snapping Turtles.

This bill authorizes the use of hooks for the capture of snapping turtles in private ponds and in shallow ponds that are duck nesting areas. Passage of this bill reverses longstanding policy in Maryland that bans the use of hooks to catch snapping turtles.

In reviewing this bill, I received many letters from individuals, students, groups in support of the humane treatment of animals, and a former member of the Maryland Senate, all of whom requested a veto of the bill. All of these groups and individuals believe that the use of hooks as a method of capture is inhumane and unnecessary. I share these concerns. Turtles captured on a hook could very well linger and suffer for days before dying or being recovered. Additionally, there was no particular scientific evidence presented to the General Assembly that Maryland's waterfowl population is so threatened by snapping turtles that a return to this method of capture is required. Opponents of the bill also argue that foxes and raccoons pose a larger threat to duck eggs and baby ducks than do snapping turtles.

For the above reasons, I have vetoed House Bill 672.

Sincerely,
Parris N. Glendening
Governor

House Bill No. 672

AN ACT concerning

Natural Resources – Snapping Turtles

FOR the purpose of providing that the Department of Natural Resources may not adopt a regulation that prohibits the catching of snapping turtles by a certain method for certain purposes; providing certain limitations on the use of certain methods of catching snapping turtles; and making stylistic changes.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Natural Resources

Section 4-738

Annotated Code of Maryland

(1989 Replacement Volume and 1996 Supplement)