



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 25

January Session, 2023

House Bill No. 6484

House of Representatives, March 7, 2023

The Committee on Environment reported through REP. GRESKO of the 121st Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective October 1, 2023*) (a) Notwithstanding the
2 provisions of title 26 of the general statutes, no person shall engage in
3 the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs or the eggs of horseshoe crabs
4 from the waters of this state.

5 (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,
6 the Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection may
7 authorize the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs by permit for
8 educational or scientific purposes provided the commissioner
9 determines that such harvesting will not cause harm to the horseshoe
10 crab population in this state.

11 (c) Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be
12 fined twenty-five dollars for each specimen taken in violation of this
13 section.

14 (d) The Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection shall
15 enforce the provisions of this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>October 1, 2023</i>	New section

ENV *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Department of Energy and Environmental Protection	GF - Revenue Loss	Up to 240	Up to 240

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill prohibits the hand-harvesting of horseshoe crabs, while allowing for certain education and medical-related exemptions. This is expected to result in an annual General Fund revenue loss of up to \$240 beginning in FY 24, associated with the anticipated reduction of hand-harvesting endorsement revenues collected by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

During the 2022 horseshoe crab season, there were 16 hand-harvest endorsement holders, with endorsements expiring on December 31, 2022. Endorsement holders must renew their license for the upcoming summer 2023 season by March 31, 2023; year-to-date, nine have renewed. The endorsement's annual cost to the holder, and corresponding revenue to the state, is \$15.

Additionally, the bill subjects someone to a \$25 fine for each horseshoe crab collected in violation of the bill. As there have been no violations and no revenue associated with this penalty under current law, which applies for hand-harvesting without an endorsement when discovered by the agency's Environmental Conservation (EnCon) fisheries patrol, this provision is not anticipated to have a fiscal impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the set fee associated with the hand-harvest endorsements, the number of endorsements issued, and the number of violations.

OLR Bill Analysis

HB 6484

AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN HARVESTING OF HORSESHOE CRABS.

SUMMARY

This bill prohibits hand-harvesting horseshoe crabs or their eggs from state waters. However, it authorizes the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) commissioner to allow, by permit, hand-harvesting horseshoe crabs for educational or scientific purposes if she determines it will not harm the state’s horseshoe crab population.

The bill (1) subjects a person to a \$25 fine for each specimen taken in violation of its provisions and (2) requires the DEEP commissioner to enforce it.

This bill’s provisions apply regardless of current laws, which allow hand-harvesting horseshoe crabs as a type of “general commercial fishing” (CGS § 26-142a(a)(9)). Also, state law currently prohibits hand-harvesting horseshoe crabs in certain areas of Stratford and makes a violation an infraction (CGS § 26-292b).

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2023

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 32 Nay 0 (02/17/2023)