

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5033

By Delegates Vance, Toney, Dean, and Bridges

[Introduced January 23, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
then Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section,
 2 designated §20-2-65, relating to the creation of a three-year pilot program for the stocking
 3 of F1 largemouth bass fingerlings, otherwise known as "tiger bass."

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

§20-2-65. F1 largemouth bass fingerling pilot program.

1 (a) Legislative findings. – The Legislature finds that well stocked lakes and streams has a
 2 positive effect on tourism in this state with anglers coming to fish the waterways we have. Studies
 3 have shown that F1 intergrade bass, otherwise known as "tiger bass," have the potential to grow
 4 faster and reach larger sizes than pure Northern strain fish, Florida strain fish, or other crosses
 5 beyond the first generation. The idea behind stocking these fish is to enhance the trophy fishery
 6 component in the lakes of this state. If fish can get to a trophy size faster, then theoretically there
 7 will be more trophy-sized fish in the lakes. By establishing a three-year pilot program, the West
 8 Virginia Division of Natural Resources can evaluate the success of stocking such fish.

9 (b) Enactment. – Beginning in the date set forth in subsection (d), the division shall stock
 10 the lakes set forth in subsection (c) of this section with 4,000 F1 largemouth bass fingerlings,
 11 otherwise known as "tiger bass." The fingerlings stocked are to be split among the seven lakes
 12 proportionate to the acreage of the lakes. The division is empowered to stock the appropriate
 13 number of fish in each lake that it deems acceptable without impacting other species of fish in
 14 these lakes.

15 (c) Lakes. – The following lakes shall be stocked as part of this pilot program:

- 16 (1) Jennings Randolph Lake in Mineral County;
- 17 (2) Stonewall Jackson Lake in Lewis County;
- 18 (3) Summersville Lake in Nicholas County;
- 19 (4) Cheat Lake in Monongalia County;
- 20 (5) East Lynn Lake in Wayne County;

- 21 (6) Bluestone Lake in Summers County; and
- 22 (7) R.D. Bailey Lake in Wyoming County.
- 23 (d) *Length of program.* – The pilot program shall begin on July 1, 2024, for the one-time
- 24 stocking of 4,000 F1 largemouth bass fingerlings. On July 1, 2027, the division shall evaluate the
- 25 success of the program, and whether it should continue or cease.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to allow for a three-year pilot program for the stocking of F1 largemouth bass fingerlings, otherwise known as "tiger bass."

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.