

SUMMARY OF NO. 19-09

This proposed law would ban the use of commercial fishing gear likely to entangle whales and sea turtles. Under the proposed law, the state Secretary of Environmental Affairs would be required to make an annual written scientific determination whether any type of fishing gear could reasonably be expected to entangle whales or sea turtles. That year, the Director of the state Division of Marine Fisheries could allow for commercial fishing only that gear determined not to cause such entanglements. The use of pot gear using vertical buoy ropes would be prohibited.

Any member of the public could enforce the proposed law by filing a civil lawsuit in the Superior Court. Successful plaintiffs would be awarded the costs of litigation.

The proposed law would become effective on January 1, 2024.