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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would require the State Health Officer to issue an advisory regarding the consumption of fish when deemed appropriate.

This bill would require the State Health Officer to establish a panel to consider and advise upon fish consumption advisories.

This bill would require the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to regularly evaluate fish species for pollutants.

This bill would require the Alabama Department of Environmental Management to post signage at access areas adjacent to waters with an active fish consumption advisory.

This bill would also require the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to notify fishing license purchasers of active fish consumption



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25 advisories.

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29 A BILL

30 TO BE ENTITLED

31 AN ACT

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33 Relating to consumption of fishes; to require the
34 State Health Officer to issue advisories concerning
35 fish consumption and to establish a panel to advise on
36 and discuss this issue; to require the Alabama
37 Department of Environmental Management to test fishes
38 for pollutants and post signage at water bodies
39 notifying of an active fish consumption advisory; and
40 to require the Department of Conservation and Natural
41 Resources to notify fish license purchasers of all
42 active advisories.

43 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

44 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as
45 the Safe and Healthy Outdoor Recreation Act of 2023.

46 Section 2. The Legislature finds and declares the
47 following:

48 (1) That outdoor recreation, including catching,



49 cooking, and eating fish is a fundamental way of life
50 for countless residents of this state.

51 (2) That all Alabamians should have the right to know
52 whether it is safe to consume the fish they catch.

53 (3) That outdoor recreation-related illnesses stemming
54 from contact with polluted waters and contaminated
55 fish pose a severe public health risk to the people of
56 Alabama.

57 Section 3. (a) The State Health Officer, in
58 consultation with the Director of the Alabama
59 Department of Environmental Management, shall issue a
60 fish consumption advisory when it is reasonable and
61 necessary to protect public health and well-being. The
62 Alabama Department of Public Health shall publish the
63 advisory on its website in a clear and concise manner
64 and maintain a dedicated telephone number to provide
65 information related to the advisory.

66 (b) The State Health Officer shall establish an
67 advisory panel to analyze, develop, and implement the
68 fish consumption advisory program. The panel shall
69 consist of, in a number to be determined by the State
70 Health Officer, representatives from the Alabama
71 Department of Public Health, the Alabama Department of
72 Environmental Management, the Department of



73 Conservation and Natural Resources, and any other
74 agency, business, nongovernmental organization, or
75 individual the State Health Officer determines
76 appropriate. The panel shall meet at least annually
77 and consider tissue sampling methodologies, water
78 bodies and fish species to be sampled, pollutant
79 toxicity limits, strategies for communicating
80 consumption advisories to the public, and any other
81 subjects relevant to the program.

82 Section 4. The Alabama Department of Environmental
83 Management, in consultation with the Alabama
84 Department of Public Health, shall conduct regular
85 fish tissue monitoring to evaluate safe consumption
86 levels of fish species. The Alabama Department of
87 Environmental Management shall annually publish a
88 report on its website, which shall be made available
89 for public comment, detailing and identifying the
90 methodology and reasoning for evaluating the species
91 and pollutants chosen.

92 Section 5. The Alabama Department of Environmental
93 Management shall post signage at any public boat ramp
94 adjacent to state waters with an active fish
95 consumption advisory notifying the public of this
96 fact. The signage shall include a telephone number for



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97 the department, an Internet address, and a quick
98 response code for a website from which to obtain
99 information about fish consumption advisories, water
100 quality, and water discharge permits. The Alabama
101 Department of Environmental Management may consult
102 with other state agencies, political subdivisions of
103 the state, nongovernmental organizations, private
104 corporations, or any other organization to implement
105 this subsection.

106 Section 6. The Department of Conservation and Natural
107 Resources, with each issuance of an electronic fishing
108 license, shall notify the licensee of current fish
109 consumption advisories by providing an Internet
110 address to access all active advisories online.

111 Section 7. This act shall become effective immediately
112 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or
113 its otherwise becoming law.