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By: **Delegates Weir, Wood, and McClenahan**  
Introduced and read first time: February 14, 2000  
Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations  
Re-referred to: Environmental Matters, February 28, 2000

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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments  
House action: Adopted  
Read second time: March 25, 2000

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CHAPTER 682

1 AN ACT concerning

2                                   **Natural Resources - Submerged Aquatic Vegetation - Recreational**  
3                                   **Watercraft**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to establish a  
5 program to study the impact of recreational watercraft on submerged aquatic  
6 vegetation beds; requiring the Department to designate certain submerged  
7 aquatic vegetation beds for the study; requiring the Department to take certain  
8 actions to mark designated submerged aquatic vegetation beds; requiring the  
9 study to make certain evaluations; authorizing the Department to adopt certain  
10 regulations; requiring the Department to make a certain report; defining certain  
11 terms; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the  
12 impact of recreational watercraft on submerged aquatic vegetation.

13 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
14 Article - Natural Resources  
15 Section 4-213(a)  
16 Annotated Code of Maryland  
17 (1997 Replacement Volume and 1999 Supplement)

18 BY adding to  
19 Article - Natural Resources  
20 Section 4-213.1  
21 Annotated Code of Maryland  
22 (1997 Replacement Volume and 1999 Supplement)

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article - Natural Resources**

4 4-213.

5 (a) In this section, "submerged aquatic vegetation" means a vascular or  
6 nonvascular hydrophyte, which is rooted or unrooted, that lies entirely beneath the  
7 surface of the water, except for flowering parts in some species.

8 4-213.1.

9 (A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS  
10 INDICATED.

11 (2) "STUDY" MEANS THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL  
12 WATERCRAFT ACTIVITIES ON SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION BEDS.

13 (3) "SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION" HAS THE MEANING STATED IN  
14 § 4-213(A) OF THIS SUBTITLE.

15 (B) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A PROGRAM TO STUDY THE IMPACT  
16 OF RECREATIONAL WATERCRAFT ACTIVITIES ON SUBMERGED AQUATIC  
17 VEGETATION BEDS IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AND COASTAL BAYS.

18 (C) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DESIGNATE A MINIMUM OF THREE  
19 SEPARATE SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION HABITATS WITHIN THE CHESAPEAKE  
20 BAY AND COASTAL BAYS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE STUDY.

21 (2) EACH DESIGNATED SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION HABITAT  
22 SHALL HAVE A MAXIMUM DEPTH OF 4 FEET.

23 (3) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CLEARLY MARK EACH DESIGNATED AREA  
24 WITH BUOYS.

25 (D) THE STUDY SHALL:

26 (1) EVALUATE THE DIRECT IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL WATERCRAFT  
27 ACTIVITIES ON THE ECOLOGICAL VALUE OF SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION  
28 BEDS; AND

29 (2) EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S ACTIVITIES  
30 DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE THE IMPACT ON SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION  
31 HABITATS.

32 (E) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ADOPT REGULATIONS TO ADMINISTER THIS  
33 SECTION.

1 (F) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY TO THE  
2 GOVERNOR AND, SUBJECT TO § 2-1246 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, TO THE  
3 GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2003.

4 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
5 ~~October~~ June 1, 2000. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and 4 months  
6 and, at the end of September 30, 2003, with no further action required by the General  
7 Assembly, this Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.