

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

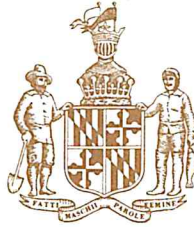
Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2020

Testimony in Favor of SB0808

Natural Resources - Fisheries Management Plans - Oysters

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 808. This bill makes several technical/timeline adjustments to the consensus-based oyster fisheries management plan (FMP) that this Committee passed last year.

The oyster continues to be one of the most controversial and divisive issues in Maryland, and in an effort to begin to rebuild cooperation and good-faith amongst both the industry and environmentalist, last session we passed Senate Bill 830. This bill restructured the Oyster Advisory Commission (OAC) and created a consensus-based process for this new OAC to develop a FMP. This bill also included specific timelines for the Department of Natural Resources to convene the OAC and for interim and final reports. As you know the Governor vetoed this bill and the General Assembly took action to override this veto. However, because the passed/overridden bill included specific timelines, these timelines must be adjusted.

As amended, Senate Bill 808:

- Requires the new OAC to be convened by April 1, 2020.
- Clarifies that the FMP developed by this process is an "updated" FMP.
- Requires interim reports on August 1, 2020, December 1, 2020, and August 1, 2021.
- Clarifies that the final interim report must include scientific modeling based on the management recommendations,
- Requires the final report to be completed by December 1, 2021.

The House version was unanimously passed on Friday. Once again, I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 808 so we can begin the process of restoring our oyster population with buy-in from the stakeholders who know it best.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Elfreth".

Sarah Elfreth