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**RECREATIONAL ANGLERS  
WORKING TO CONSERVE, PROMOTE, AND ENHANCE MARYLAND'S  
MARINE RESOURCES**

2/25/2020

To: Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair  
Honorable Members of the Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: SB 437 Prohibition of Dredging on Man O War Shoal

**CCA Maryland Position: Support**

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Coastal Conservation Association Maryland strongly supports SB 437, which will provide permanent protection for Man O War Shoal, a popular fishing and boating location in the upper bay that has been enjoyed by generations of citizens and is utilized by Baltimore County watermen for crabbing and harvest of spat on shell oyster plantings.

For more than a decade the Department of Natural Resources has sought permits to dredge buried oyster shell at locations in the upper bay including Man O War Shoal that have generated intense opposition from citizens who use the areas.

However, dredging buried shell from Man O War Shoal would provide only a short-term solution to the need for substrate on which to grow oysters, as the shell degrades with time and loses its ability to set oyster larvae.

From 1960 -2006 nearly 200 million bushels of shell were dredged from numerous buried shell deposits in the upper bay and used to supplement the public oyster fishery in the middle and lower bay. While it initially increased oyster harvests, when the available permitted shell deposits were exhausted and public opposition to the dredging increased the Repletion Program ended. Oyster harvests decreased and the oyster population in the bay continued its decline.

In recent years there has developed increasingly successful experience with growing oysters on alternative materials to buried shell such as limestone, granite from Harford County quarries and environmentally clean concrete.

Given the numerous alternatives to buried shell, the past impacts in the upper bay and irreversible changes to DNR's plan, Man O War Shoal should be removed as an option in any future oyster fisheries management plan.

**For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 437**