



Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Dear House Environment and Transportation Committee members,

I asked that you find a favorable report for HB1434. It is important to ensure the future of the oyster aquaculture industry in the state of Maryland.

It would have been impossible to fully understand all of the environmental or operational issues and subtleties as this industry was getting started ten plus years ago. This bill is intended to simply fix small operational issues.

No one should get \$250 tickets for not having a single corner marked the day after an ice storm rips them out. No one should be getting thousands of dollars worth of tickets before they begin work because Maryland has issued a lease but Army Corps of Engineers has not issued a lease allowing corner to be marked.

No one should lose a lease that took years to get just because of environmental conditions, like the freshet of 2018 and 2019, destroyed hatchery production and little seed was available to the industry for planting. While that may sound obvious, DNR sent out many letters threatening people's leases at the beginning of 2020 because they had not made use of the lease in 2019 because of historically low salt levels and not seed availability.

Please call me and I would be happy to talk about any issue if you have questions



Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "JD Blackwell".

JD Blackwell
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