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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 979

TITLE: Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals

SPONSOR: Senator Salling

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 16, 2022

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 979 – Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals. This legislation would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from including the dredging of buried oyster shells on Man-O-War Shoals as a part of the fishery management plan and ensure that DNR is not allowed to perform any dredging on this shoal.

Protecting the Man-O-War Shoals is essential to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, and dredging this area may have unintended, yet catastrophic consequences. Dredging creates uninhabitable conditions for fish and other local underwater wildlife, many of which are vital for recreational and commercial fishing. Baltimore County Watermen’s Association notes that dredging may contribute to significant declines in crab populations which are critical to Maryland’s economy. Man-O-War Shoals is an essential economic and recreational resource to the residents of Baltimore County; the State’s partnership with the County would guarantee the Shoals’ continued ecological health.

Senate Bill 979 prevents the dredging of oyster shells on Man-O-War Shoals. If dredging were to continue, Maryland could lose a significant source of revenue and treasured natural resource. Efforts to preserve Man-O-War Shoals are jointly supported by the Baltimore County Executive and the Baltimore County Council.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 979. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.