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Position: FAV



02/19/2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FAVORABLE

SUPPORT FOR ABANDONED OR SUNKEN VESSELS AND WATERWAY IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANTS ACT (SB674)

As the President & CEO of the Maryland Center for History and Culture, I am writing to offer our support for SB674, which in addition to addressing issues concerning the state's Waterway Improvement Fund and abandoned vessels, also establishes a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT DIVERSE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT BAY WATERSHED

The new Maritime Heritage Grant funding will provide sorely needed support for organizations like ours that are working to interpret and engage the public around the diverse history of the Bay. Currently, there are very few flexible sources of funds for programming and this new fund will address that crucial need.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE & POSITIVE IMPACT ON HERITAGE TOURISM

The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources. Funding would then be made available annually through a competitive grant process to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, and research at maritime sites within the watershed. The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

This arrangement, administered by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, is a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and history. **We urge a favorable report.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Katie Caljean'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katie Caljean
President & CEO
Maryland Center for History and Culture

BaltimoreCounty_FAV_SB0674.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenn Aiosa

Position: FAV



JOHN A. OLSZEWSKI JR.

County Executive

JENNIFER AIOSA

Director of Government Affairs

AMANDA KONTZ CARR

Legislative Officer

WILLIAM J. THORNE

Legislative Associate

BILL NO.: **SB 674**

TITLE: Abandoned or Sunken Vessels and Waterway Improvement Fund Grants

SPONSOR: Senator Elfreth

COMMITTEE: Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 20, 2024

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** SB674 – Abandoned or Sunken Vessels and Waterway Improvement Fund Grants. This bill would require a vessel owner to provide their mailing address, telephone number and email address as part of their vessel registration process to make contact easier, when necessary.

Abandoned vessels are increasingly plaguing the waterways in Baltimore County. Many of these vessels contain hazardous materials such as gasoline and oil, which leak into the water. In many cases, the cost of maintaining a vessel becomes onerous for an owner, so the vessel is simply left in the water or abandoned at a dock. Registration information is rarely current because state law does not require registration information to be updated when an owner moves or transfers ownership. SB674 would require more reliable information that Baltimore County Police Department's Marine Unit could use to attempt to contact the current or last known owner of a vessel. By allowing notification by email to an owner of a vessel, the hope is that it will become more difficult for an owner to simply walk away from a boat they no longer want.

In addition, SB674 authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to stand up a voluntary “turn-in” program for vessel owners to relinquish their vessel in a more responsible manner. It is our sincere hope that should this legislation pass, that DNR would move swiftly to create such a program, and work with local Marine Units to collaboratively address the growing challenge of derelict and abandoned vessels in Maryland.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB674 from the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Favorable for SB674.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Brown

Position: FAV



**HISTORIC
ANNAPOLIS**

Historic Annapolis, Inc.
James Brice House
42 East Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410.267.7619
410.626.1030 Fax

February 16, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FAVORABLE

SUPPORT FOR ABANDONED OR SUNKEN VESSELS AND WATERWAY IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANTS ACT (SB674)

As the President and CEO of Historic Annapolis, I am writing to offer our support for SB674, which in addition to addressing issues concerning the state's Waterway Improvement Fund and abandoned vessels, also establishes a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT DIVERSE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT BAY WATERSHED

The new Maritime Heritage Grant funding will provide sorely needed support for organizations like ours that are working to interpret and engage the public around the diverse history of the Bay. Currently, there are very few flexible sources of funds for programming and this new fund will address that crucial need. From maritime museums to lighthouses to sites of indigenous native cultures, the newly established fund will provide much-needed support to expand public programming and engagement throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE & POSITIVE IMPACT ON HERITAGE TOURISM

The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources. Funding would then be made available annually through a competitive grant process to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, and research at maritime sites within the watershed. The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

This arrangement, administered by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, is a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and history and will help to increase opportunities for visitation to our site and the added benefit these visits have on our local economy.

It is for these reasons and the positive impact it will have across the state on organizations of all sizes that we offer our full support. **We urge a favorable report.**

Respectfully,

Karen Theimer Brown

President and CEO

**PRESERVE.
PROTECT.
CONNECT.**

www.annapolis.org

Letter of Support_Maritime Grant Program_Southern

Uploaded by: Lucille Walker

Position: FAV

February 19, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FAVORABLE

SUPPORT FOR ABANDONED OR SUNKEN VESSELS AND WATERWAY IMPROVEMENT FUND GRANTS ACT (SB674)

As the executive director of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, I am writing to offer our support for SB674, which in addition to addressing issues concerning the state's Waterway Improvement Fund and abandoned vessels, also establishes a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

PROGRAM WILL SUPPORT DIVERSE PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT BAY WATERSHED

The new Maritime Heritage Grant funding will provide sorely needed support for organizations like ours that are working to interpret and engage the public around the diverse history of the Bay. Currently, there are very few flexible sources of funds for programming and this new fund will address that crucial need. From maritime museums to lighthouses to sites of indigenous native cultures, the newly established fund will provide much-needed support to expand public programming and engagement throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed.

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE & POSITIVE IMPACT ON HERITAGE TOURISM

The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources. Funding would then be made available annually through a competitive grant process to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, and research at maritime sites within the watershed. The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

This arrangement, administered by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, is a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and history and will help to increase opportunities for visitation to our site and the added benefit these visits have on our local economy.

It is for these reasons and the positive impact it will have across the state on organizations of all sizes that we offer our full support. **We urge a favorable report.**

Respectfully,

Lucille W. Walker
Executive Director
Southern Maryland National Heritage Area

PresMD FAVORABLE SB674.pdf

Uploaded by: Nicholas Redding

Position: FAV



PRESERVATION MARYLAND

February 16, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

SB 674 | FAVORABLE

Chairperson Feldman,

On behalf of the staff and Board of Directors of Preservation Maryland and our thousands of statewide supporters, I thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **SUPPORT of SB674** – a piece of legislation that will establish a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

Why is this Needed? A program like this – *focusing on the history of the Bay* – is critical to the future of Bay restoration efforts because, in the end, “we will conserve only what we love.”* Exhibits, programs, and tours of the Bay inspire understanding, awareness and appreciation and will make a difference for the Bay’s future. Numerous studies have also documented the need for flexible support for these small, often volunteer run organizations that tell Maryland’s maritime story.

Who Supports This? We are also joined in our support by many respected maritime-focused organizations around the state (some of which have also submitted written testimony), including: **the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (St. Michaels), the Maryland Center for History & Culture (Baltimore City), Maryland Humanities (Statewide), the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, Annapolis Maritime Museum and Historic Annapolis, Inc.**

What will the grants support? Currently there is *no dedicated maritime heritage funding* in Maryland and this new fund will address that need. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, research, and other difficult to fund non-capital needs at maritime heritage sites within the watershed.

The diversity of Maryland’s maritime story is unique – *and deserves to be told in its entirety*. From maritime museums to lighthouses to sites of indigenous native

cultures, the newly established fund will provide much-needed support to expand public programming and engagement throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. In turn, this will also create new tourism products to market.

Where does the funding come from? The \$250,000 annual appropriation will come from the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

How will it be administered? The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources.

The intent is to establish a program where the nonprofit would make funds available annually through a competitive grant process (vetted by a diverse and professional review panel) to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The nonprofit would report annually on the selected projects and the impact of the funding to the agency. Administration by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, will be a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and programmatic efficiency.

It is for these reasons and the positive impact it will have across the state on organizations of all sizes that we offer our full support.

We urge a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Redding
President & CEO

Preservation Maryland is the nonprofit, statewide voice for historic preservation that harnesses the power of historic places by revitalizing and reinvesting in communities, advocating, and building the historic trades workforce for the benefit of all Marylanders. Learn more at: presmd.org

** The full quote from Baba Dioum is: "In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught."*

Letter of Support SB674 - Lesher.pdf

Uploaded by: Pete Lesher

Position: FAV

February 19, 2024

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee:

As the Chief Historian for Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, I am writing to offer our support for SB674, which in addition to addressing issues concerning the state's Waterway Improvement Fund and abandoned vessels, also establishes a mechanism to fund a Maritime Heritage Grant program.

The new Maritime Heritage Grant funding will provide sorely needed support for organizations like ours that are working to interpret and engage the public around the diverse history of the Bay. Currently, there are few flexible sources of funds for programming and this new fund will address that crucial need. From maritime museums to lighthouses to sites of indigenous native cultures, the newly established fund will provide much-needed support to expand public programming and engagement throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The dedicated fund would be administered by a qualified non-profit organization selected by the Department Natural Resources. Funding would then be made available annually through a competitive grant process to organizations and units of government for maritime heritage and history projects. The intent of the legislation is to provide funding to support historic interpretation, programming, events, and research at maritime sites within the watershed. The source of the \$250,000 annual appropriation will be the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund.

This arrangement, administered by a partner nonprofit organization selected by DNR, is a win-win for Maryland's renowned maritime heritage and history and will help to increase opportunities for visitation to our site and the added benefit these visits have on our local economy.

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum preserves a fleet of nine of Maryland's historic vessels from the 1889 sailing log bugeye *Edna E. Lockwood*, a National Historic Landmark, to the 1920 buyboat *Winnie Estelle*, now undergoing extensive work on its keel, and 1934 Hoopers Island dovetail *Martha*. In addition, nearly 80,000 visitors yearly explore our 12 exhibition buildings, which collectively anchor the tourism industry in Talbot County.

It is for these reasons and the positive impact it will have across the state on organizations of all sizes that Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum offers its full support. **We urge a favorable report.**

Respectfully,

Pete Leshner
Chief Historian
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

SB 674 - Elfreth Testimony.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Elfreth

Position: FAV

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County



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Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Capital Budget

Pensions

Chair, Public Safety,
Transportation, and Environment

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area

Chair, Joint Subcommittee on
Program Open Space/Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 20, 2024

Testimony in Favor of SB 674
Abandoned or Sunken Vessels and Maritime Heritage Grant Program

Chairman Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 674 which will improve the State's contact with and response to suspected abandoned and hazardous boats as well as establish the Maritime Heritage Grant Program.

District 30 includes miles of beautiful waterfront. Consequently, our office frequently receives calls from constituents concerned about boats that are visibly sinking, anchored in a hazardous area, or are potentially abandoned. In these events, our office contacts the Natural Resource Police (NRP), who investigate the issue and attempt to contact the owner on record of the vessel. Far too often, NRP are unable to get in contact with the vessel owner, or by the time they do, the boat has sunk.

Current statute requires only that boat owners submit a physical mailing address on their vessel registration. As a result, NRP have only the option of attempting to contact vessel owners in emergency situations through standard mail. The only way in which NRP can determine that the vessel owner is unable to be contacted is by the return of the mailed notice to the sender. This procedure is antiquated and ineffective, resulting in extended timelines for intervention of hazardous and abandoned boats. Our experience in District 30 shows us that when hazardous boats are not addressed in a timely manner, they are more likely to sink, which is exponentially more expensive to address. It costs as much as five times the amount of money to lift a sunken boat than it does to tow it in the first place. Sinking boats also cause significant environmental and navigational threats to our environment and other boaters.

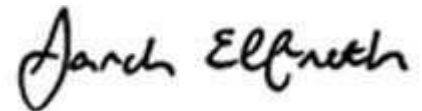
SB 674 will empower the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and NRP to more immediately contact the owners of vessels in the event of suspected abandonment or hazardous conditions of a boat. Boat registration will now require the documentation of a telephone number and email address for all vessel owners, giving NRP more tools to contact vessel owners with immediacy. DNR will also have the ability to require emergency contact information for vessel owners. This bill clarifies that unreturned phone calls and emails as well as emails returned to sender would constitute attempted and unsuccessful contact to vessel owners, allowing NRP to move more quickly in addressing boats abandoned or in dangerous situations.

SB 674 establishes a vessel turn-in program to provide assistance and relief to boat owners who are no longer able to afford docking and care of their vessel. Boat owners experiencing financial hardship may not be able to continue affording the upkeep and storage of their vessels. This often leads to boat abandonment and eventual hazardous conditions. The vessel turn-in program will provide a mechanism for boat owners to turn their vessel in to DNR in order to prevent abandonment. DNR will manage the program and advertise it publicly as an available option for vessel owners in need. Additionally, NRP will provide this as an option when contacting the owners of vessels. DNR reports that this program can and will be done utilizing existing funding and will not require additional revenue.

SB 674 establishes an annual grant program to promote public education on Maryland's unique maritime history. This bill empowers DNR to allocate \$250,000 from the Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) to the Maritime Heritage Grant Program. Grantees will utilize this funding to establish public programming highlighting and celebrating Maryland's maritime heritage. As a result of the implementation of this annual grant, Marylanders will have brand new opportunities to experience, access, and learn about Maryland's one-of-a-kind maritime history - history that led to and sustains our thriving boating culture and economy.

I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 674.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Elfreth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Sarah Elfreth
District 30

SB0674_DNR_SWA_EEE_2-20-24.pdf

Uploaded by: Dylan Behler

Position: FWA



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

February 20, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 674 - First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Abandoned or Sunken Vessels and Waterway Improvement Fund Grants

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

The Department supports Senate Bill 674 with the proposed amendments. The Department shares the concern addressed in this bill, as abandoned and sunken vessels often present environmental and navigational hazards which can be avoided or mitigated by the measures proposed in the bill. The Department offers amendments to the current bill text concerning the vessel turn-in program, which would allow qualifying vessel owners with unwanted vessels to be proactive in the disposal of those vessels, before they become at risk of sinking or becoming abandoned. The proposed amendment would permit the disposal of identified vessels while they are still in a condition to safely tow, reducing costs and allowing for more participation for the same funding commitment. The proposed amendment would also establish criteria for use by the Department in prioritizing vessel removal if annual costs for removal exceed available funding or staff resources.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NR § 8-721 which provides statutory processes for the notifications to owners of abandoned and sunken vessels, as well as for their subsequent removal and disposal was last modified in the 2020 session of the Maryland General Assembly (CH 75/CH 76). There is no previous legislative history for a voluntary vessel turn-in program.

BILL EXPLANATION

Senate Bill 674 requires vessel owners to provide emergency contact information to the Department. SB 674 also modernizes methods of notification for individual vessel owners and the general public when the Department intends to take action to dispose of abandoned and sunken vessels. The bill also establishes a new voluntary vessel turn-in program, whereby qualifying owners can relinquish their unwanted vessels for purposes of disposal.

Contact: Dylan Behler, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services
dylan.behler@maryland.gov ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-924-0891 (cell)

BY:

(To be offered in the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee)

AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 674

(First Reading File Bill)

AMENDMENT NO. 1

On page 6, strike beginning with “DETERMINED” in line 28 down through “SUBTITLE,” in line 30.

On page 7, in line 4, after “VESSEL;” insert “AND”; in line 5, strike “STATE; AND” and substitute “STATE.”; strike in their entirety lines 6 through 7, inclusive; and strike beginning with “THE” in line 8 down through “MOORING” in line 19 and substitute:

“IN EVALUATING WHETHER A VESSEL IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES, IN ORDER OF PRIORITY:

(1) A VESSEL THAT IS ABANDONED OR SUNKEN AS DEFINED IN § 8-721 OF THIS SUBTITLE;

(2) SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA, A VESSEL THAT IS AT RISK OF BECOMING ABANDONED OR SUNKEN:

(i) THE VESSEL IS TAKING ON OR HAS TAKEN ON WATER WITHOUT AN EFFECTIVE MEANS TO DRAIN OR EMPTY THE WATER;

(ii) SPACES ON THE VESSELS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO BE ENCLOSED ARE INCAPABLE OF BEING SEALED OFF OR REMAIN OPEN TO THE ELEMENTS FOR EXTENDED PERIODS OF TIME; OR

(iii) THE VESSEL HAS BROKEN FROM OR IS IN DANGER OF BREAKING LOOSE FROM ITS ANCHOR; AND

(3) ANY OTHER VESSEL THE DEPARTMENT DETERMINES IS ELIGIBLE FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM”.