



The Maryland Watermen's Association, Inc.

5 March 2024

HB 1231 – Favorable

Chair and Members of the Environmental and Transportation Committee, the Maryland Watermen's Association is in favor of HB – 1231-Natural Resources – Fisheries – Oyster Management.

Back 1982-83, Sommerset County was permitted to open Power Dredging for oyster in Kedge Straits and Great Bar with a 15 bushels limit. Scientist stated that these two areas would be destroyed within Five years and an end to power dredging. However, after 5 years these areas started to produce and show successful trends. The areas were then expanded into much of Sommerset County and later into Dorchester County. Then in late 1999 and 2000 MSX and Dermo devastated the Chesapeake Bay to the lowest harvest ever recorded of 26,000 bushels but had a good spat set on shells which had been cleaned and reclaimed by power dredging and is now the most productive area in the Bay. This past season harvest was 720,000 bushels.

This was accomplished with a reduction of 24% of the public's best bottom to Sanctuaries, which forced most of commercial harvest into the power dredged areas. We need to continue to rehabilitate more areas with power dredging, as it reclaims half buried shell. I ask for a favorable vote on HB-1231.

 Recoverable Signature

X *Robert T. Brown, Sr.*

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Signed by: a8c4cca2-1613-4eff-81f5-20bd5a6a8eba

Respectfully,

ROBERT T BROWN, SR.
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