

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2001 Session

**FISCAL NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 921 (Delegates W. Baker and McClenahan)

Environmental Matters

Economic and Environmental Affairs

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**Natural Resources - Methods for Catching Oysters and Spat**

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This bill requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to adopt regulations that allow the use of suspended devices and material devices placed on the bottom to catch oyster spat for use on a leased oyster bottom by a lessee. The bill also modifies a current provision relating to catching oyster spat by suspended means by providing that, in accordance with regulations, a lessee may catch spat using cultch material on strings, trays, bags, or similar devices so long as they do not interfere with navigation. The bill also modifies current provisions relating to the use of specified methods for catching oysters or clams. The bill repeals the provision that allows the use of cultch material suspended on strings, in trays, in bags, or similar devices for catching oysters or clams.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2001 and sunsets June 30, 2006.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** DNR can handle the bill's requirements with existing budgeted resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** Minimal.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** Subject to restrictions promulgated by DNR, a person may catch oysters or clams only by hand, rakes, tongs, patent tongs, diving apparatus, dredges, handscrapes, cultch material suspended on strings, in trays, in bags, or other similar devices. A person

may catch oyster spat by suspended means such as cultch material on strings, trays, bags, or similar devices which do not touch the bottom and do not interfere with navigation.

**Background:** The oyster fishery has declined dramatically in recent years. The State currently produces seed oysters to be used in aquaculture and to support the commercial fishery. However, the amount of seed oysters produced by the State is not sufficient to fully support both efforts. This bill would increase the State's options for oyster restoration and productivity.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader – March 1, 2001  
jm/jr Revised – House Third Reader – March 23, 2001

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Analysis by: Lesley Frymier

Direct Inquiries to:  
John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510