

# HOUSE BILL 1137

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8lr3082

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By: **Delegates Jacobs, Arentz, Fisher, Ghrist, Grammer, Long, Mautz, Metzgar, and Otto**

Introduced and read first time: February 8, 2018

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Fisheries – Commercial Oyster Divers**

3 FOR the purpose of altering the tidal fish license and oyster authorization requirements  
4 for persons aboard a boat who are using diving apparatus to catch oysters for  
5 commercial purposes from the waters of the State; altering the catch limits for  
6 certain commercial oyster divers under certain circumstances; prohibiting more than  
7 a certain number of commercial oyster divers from working on a boat at any one  
8 time; requiring each commercial oyster diver to have an attendant on the boat;  
9 providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to commercial oyster  
10 divers.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
12 Article – Natural Resources  
13 Section 4–1015.1  
14 Annotated Code of Maryland  
15 (2012 Replacement Volume and 2017 Supplement)

16 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
17 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

18 **Article – Natural Resources**

19 4–1015.1.

20 (a) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle or regulation  
21 promulgated thereunder, a person who catches oysters from the waters of this State using  
22 any sort of diving apparatus shall cull the oysters on the natural bar from which they were  
23 caught, and return to the bar all shells, stones, gravel, and slag. Any oyster whose shell  
24 measures less than 3 inches in distance between its longest or widest points, whether or  
25 not attached to a marketable oyster, shall be included in the culling and replaced on the

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 bar from which caught. Oyster culling shall be completed before any oyster is thrown or  
2 deposited in the hold or bottom of any boat.

3 (2) After culling and placing in the hold or bottom of a boat, a diver's  
4 possession of oysters may not include a combined total of more than 5 percent of oysters  
5 which measure less than 3 inches between its longest or widest points, and cultch consisting  
6 of shells, stones, gravel, and slag. In ascertaining this percentage the Department shall  
7 select by random sample an amount of oysters from any pile, hold, bin, house, or place as  
8 deemed proper and require it to be culled and disposed of, as provided by this section. All  
9 small oysters and cultch that adhere to marketable oysters shall be separated, and the  
10 marketable oysters shall be excluded from any measurement of small oysters and cultch.  
11 However, a person may possess marketable oysters that have undersized oysters or spat  
12 less than 1 inch in distance between their longest or widest points attached to them that  
13 cannot be separated without destroying the small oyster.

14 [(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this subtitle or regulation  
15 promulgated pursuant to this subtitle, persons aboard a boat who are using diving  
16 apparatus to catch oysters from the waters of this State may not catch more than a total of  
17 30 bushels per boat in any day. Any person aboard a boat on which more than 30 bushels  
18 have been caught in a day may be charged with violating this subsection.]

19 (B) (1) THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES TO PERSONS ABOARD A BOAT WHO  
20 ARE USING DIVING APPARATUS TO CATCH OYSTERS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES  
21 FROM THE WATERS OF THE STATE.

22 (2) NOT MORE THAN TWO DIVERS MAY WORK FROM A BOAT AT ANY  
23 ONE TIME.

24 (3) EACH DIVER SHALL HAVE ONE ATTENDANT ON THE BOAT.

25 (4) FOR EACH COMBINATION OF A DIVER AND AN ATTENDANT,  
26 EITHER THE DIVER OR THE ATTENDANT OR BOTH SHALL POSSESS AN  
27 AUTHORIZATION TO CATCH OYSTERS FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES.

28 (5) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (6) OF THIS SUBSECTION AND  
29 NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF THIS SUBTITLE:

30 (I) IF BOTH THE DIVER AND THE ATTENDANT POSSESS AN  
31 OYSTER AUTHORIZATION, THE COMBINATION MAY CATCH UP TO 30 BUSHELS OF  
32 OYSTERS PER DAY; OR

33 (II) IF ONLY ONE OF THE DIVER OR ATTENDANT COMBINATION  
34 POSSESSES AN OYSTER AUTHORIZATION, THE COMBINATION MAY CATCH UP TO 15  
35 BUSHELS OF OYSTERS PER DAY.

1                   **(6) PERSONS ON A BOAT MAY NOT CATCH MORE THAN 30 BUSHELS OF**  
2 **OYSTERS PER BOAT PER DAY.**

3                   **(7) ANY PERSON ABOARD A BOAT ON WHICH MORE THAN 30 BUSHELS**  
4 **OF OYSTERS HAVE BEEN CAUGHT IN A DAY MAY BE CHARGED WITH A VIOLATION OF**  
5 **THIS SUBSECTION.**

6           (c)     The Department shall by rule and regulation set aside certain waters of this  
7 State to be used exclusively by hand tongers in catching oysters. Before adopting the  
8 regulations in their final form, the Department shall consult each of the local hand tonger  
9 committees.

10           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
11 October 1, 2018.