

HOUSE BILL 784

M2

6lr2750

By: **Delegate D. Jones**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Aquaculture – Placement of Shellfish, Bags, Nets, and Structures on Submerged**
3 **Aquatic Vegetation – Extension**

4 FOR the purpose of extending the authorization of a leaseholder of certain aquaculture
5 leases, with prior written approval from the Department of Natural Resources, to
6 place shellfish, bags, nets, and structures on submerged aquatic vegetation, subject
7 to certain requirements; and generally relating to aquaculture leases and submerged
8 aquatic vegetation.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

10 Article – Natural Resources
11 Section 4–11A–10(c) and (c–1)
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

15 Chapter 238 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2019, as amended by Chapter
16 113 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2024
17 Section 3

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

20 **Article – Natural Resources**

21 4–11A–10.

22 (c) A leaseholder may not:

23 (1) Place shellfish, bags, nets, or structures on submerged aquatic
24 vegetation without prior written approval from the Department;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



- (2) Plant or harvest shellfish within 500 yards of any stationary blind or
hat is occupied and being used for hunting migratory waterfowl;
- (3) Sublease a lease;
- (4) Transfer a lease without the approval of the Department;
- (5) Harvest shellfish outside the hours established by the Department in
or
- (6) Place unlawfully harvested oysters on a lease.

(c-1) In approving the placement of shellfish, bags, nets, or structures on emerged aquatic vegetation under subsection (c)(1) of this section, the Department:

10 (1) May not authorize harvesting by dredge in areas where submerged
11 aquatic vegetation is present;

12 (2) Shall authorize for water column leases the placement of shellfish,
13 bags, nets, or structures in at least 10% of the area where submerged aquatic vegetation is
14 present; and

15 (3) Shall authorize harvest by diving in areas on any submerged land lease
16 where submerged aquatic vegetation is present.

17 Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2019, as amended by Chapter 113 of the Acts of 2024

18 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
19 1, 2019. It shall remain effective for a period of [8] 11 years and 1 month and, at the end
20 of June 30, [2027] 2030, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,
21 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
23 1, 2026.