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**BILL NO.:** SB 437

**TITLE:** Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals

**SPONSOR:** Baltimore County Senators

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**POSITION:** **SUPPORT**

**DATE:** February 25, 2020

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 437 – Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals. This proposed legislation would ban the Department of Natural Resources from dredging buried oyster shells on Man-O-War Shoals, or from including dredging in a fishery management plan.

Maryland's Man-O-War Shoal is the last relic of the oyster reef in the Upper Chesapeake Bay. It is essential to Baltimore County in many ways – it is a favorite location for both recreational and commercial fishing and crabbing. Dredging the shoal would expose oxygen to an area that had been sealed off for centuries, leading to rapid decomposition. This reef protects the bay – oysters filter water, provide habitat to other species, and protect underwater vegetation and waterfront communities from storms. Opening it up to dredging would be nothing less than catastrophic for the bay.

If enacted, SB 437 would not just be protecting the reef, it would be protecting the entire Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, Baltimore County's watermen, and the thousands of people who rely on the bay for recreation.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 437. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Chief Legislative Officer, at 443-900-6582.