



The Maryland Watermen's Association, Inc.

SB629

We all support protecting the SAV. However drawing lines from point to point to protect SAV's limits a large area. The buffer zones proposed of 150 feet is too large, and has no scientific data to support the request for this increase. The data years that have been used on the Grass lines are from 2016, which are 5 years old. The data being used from harvest information is from 2018, which is non-comparable with the 2016 data. In addition, we have concerns about the time frame of when this aerial footage was gathered. The dated aerial footage will negatively impact the chosen optimal locations for SAV protection. Without up-to-date maps, at this time not only is the protection of the SAV compromised, Clammer's are being boxed out of vital workable grounds unnecessarily. These areas need to have buoy's to protect the clamming industry and protect the SAV's areas, but not to the 150 feet that this Bill 629 proposes.

Changing the time period from 3 to 5 years to see if grasses return is too long a period of time. If grasses do not return in 3 years the bottom should be returned for clamming. A number of areas after being clammed, grasses have started coming back because of the digging of clams helps break down the chemical imbalance from pollutants flushed in the Bay. After a certain depth grasses cannot get enough sunlight to reproduce and these buffer zones are too extensive.



The Maryland Watermen's Association, Inc.

The impact to the crabbing industry will be detrimental, as well as the clamming industry. Crabs will increase per bushel during the optional holidays. Crabbers depend on the razor clam every day to bait their trotlines and pots, as well as the recreational crabber which buys their bait from the Bait Shops. This is a multi-million dollar industry. The Crab season will soon be here; with the warm winter we have had crabs may appear early this season. Some reports from oystermen and fishermen have seen some movement already.

For these reason the MWA opposes SB629.

ROBERT T BROWN, SR.

PRESIDENT

MARYLAND WATERMEN'S ASSOCIATION, INC.

410-216-6610