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**RECREATIONAL ANGLERS
WORKING TO CONSERVE, PROMOTE, AND ENHANCE MARYLAND'S
MARINE RESOURCES**

2/25/20

To: Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair
Honorable Members of the Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

Re: **Senate Bill 629** Natural Resources – SAV Protection Zones and Hydraulic Clam Dredges (Aquatic Habitat Protection Act)

CCA Maryland Position: Support

As recreational anglers, CCA Maryland members recognize the key role that Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) plays in supporting the health and abundance of the many gamefish species we rely on. Most notably is our state fish, the striped bass. Between 70-90% of the coast-wide population of striped bass are born in the Chesapeake Bay, and SAV plays a very important role in their juvenile development and overall success. Blue crabs are another important species that use SAV throughout their lifecycles. SAV also helps absorb wave energy to limit erosion, and trap and stabilize sediment.

In the simplest terms, SAV is a key part of the health and function of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem providing a large number of ecosystem services.

While nutrient loading, sediment, large storms, and erosion have played a major role in the negative changes of SAV over the years, there are also user and gear related impacts on SAV that are necessary to manage.

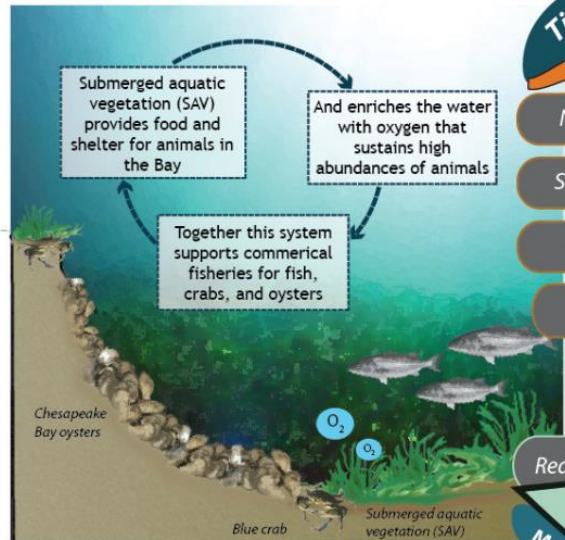
Unfortunately, different regulations exist for the management of SAV impacts at this time, and this legislation aims to provide consistency in regulation, and the authority of the Department of Natural Resources to regulate hydraulic clamming gear, which is known to impact SAV.

Simply put, we support this legislation as a pathway towards providing consistency in regulation to the many users of our shared natural resources, and a way to conserve vitally important habitat and support the long-term health of the Chesapeake Bay.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable vote on SB 629.

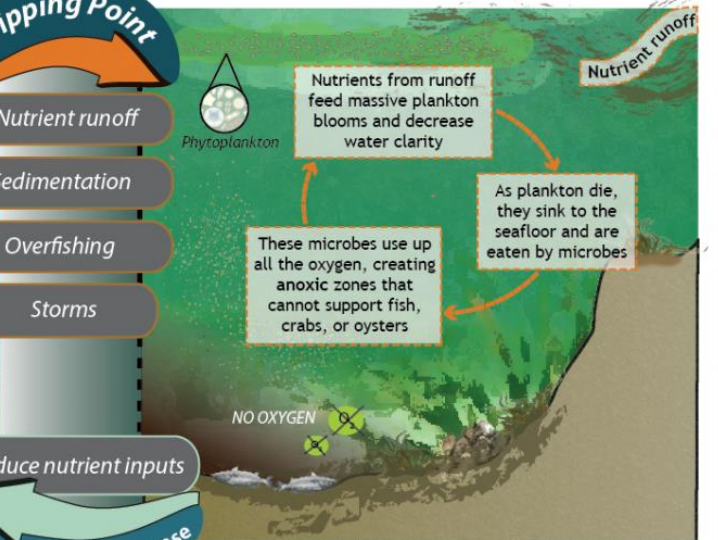
CHESAPEAKE BAY ESTUARY

A. Healthy Bay



The diversity of animals in Chesapeake Bay relies on clean water to enable vegetation to thrive and support commercial fisheries in the region

B. Degraded Ecosystem



Agricultural and urban runoff has impaired the Bay's water quality and led to low or no oxygen zones that cannot support most marine life



Basic SAV diagram: Source Oceaantippingpo

