



The Maryland Watermen's Association, Inc.

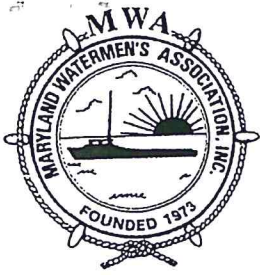
24 February 2020

SB948

Last Year Senate Bill 830 was passed to create a new Oyster Advisory Commission. Senator Pinsky fought for it on the Senate floor, got it passed and then was veto by Governor Larry Hogan. It was then over ridden in January 2020 by the Senate. Now, Senator Pinsky has Bill 948 which would retire the authorization to oyster and if oyster surcharge has not been paid in 2018-2019 Season or 2019-2020 Season prior to December 1, 2019. This Bill 948 undermines Bill 830. This should go to the newly formed Oyster Advisory Commission prior to legislation for input.

If you have any commercial fishing license in Maryland including the Unlimited Tidal Fish License, (TFL), each year in July, the Department of Natural Resource (DNR) send a renewal in the mail automatically, you check off what fisheries you want and can send check payable to DNR, except for the surcharge for oyster harvest. You must go to the DNR Service Center to pay and sign for the State of Maryland Shellfish Closures book, which shows where Sanctuary, Conditional Harvesting, polluted areas and NOAA codes etc. for enforcement of regulation and laws. Only if you were going to oyster that season and pay Oyster surcharges would you have to appear in person at a DNR Service Center.

The TFL was developed for the full time watermen in 1992 and has had no problem until now. For our seafood industry to work we need flexibility to shift



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from one fishery to another; for example if crabbing, fishing or clamming is poor during the fall they can shift to oystering. Vice-versa this flex ability helps take the pressure of a fishery as needed.

Has there been an Economic Impact Study on what adverse effects this will have on the whole seafood industry? A multi-species management plan, not one species at a time needs to be developed. With the retirement of Oyster Authorization, what happens to the youth and the future of our industry? Send this proposed Bill 948, to the newly formed OAC to address this issue.

For these reasons the MWA opposes Senate Bill 948. We ask this committee to come back with an unfavorable finding and ask for you to send this to the OAC.

Buddy Hampton
College