

Joe Anderson
President

February 8, 2021

Patricia Samford
Vice President

Subject: SB0442: Aquaculture Leases and Shellfish Nursery Operations - Wetlands Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee – February 10th, 2021

Larry O'Brien
Secretary

FAVORABLE

Chandler Wyatt
Treasurer

Dear Senator Klausmeier and members of the Committee,

Melina Cavathas
Director

Captain Will Gates
Director

We request a favorable finding for SB0442, Aquaculture Leases and Shellfish Nursery Operations - Wetlands.

John Giusti
Director

The St. Mary's River Watershed Association is an engaged partner with the state on several fronts including the large-scale oyster restoration of the St. Mary's River shellfish sanctuary. Our work requires a setting facility on the shore with access and operations from an adjacent pier. While we do not utilize a tumbler, we do use other equipment from time to time including power washers and pumps.

Emily Jackson
Director

Captain Paul Kellam
Director

David Lewis
Director

In 2019, the Maryland General Assembly unanimously passed (and the Governor signed) HB 28/SB 939 to allow oyster growers to operate oyster nursery equipment on their docks, recognizing that it presented no impairment to water quality and likely resulted in improved water quality. At the time emphasis was placed on ending the need for nursery operations to seek permits from MDE as well as from DNR. This bill, SB0442, adds further clarity to this policy change and provides MDE with clear legal language to end requirement for any permits through their Department. This will further streamline the permitting process and clarify MDE's role in authorizing oyster aquaculture and oyster nursery operations on piers and shorelines. This bills has no cost associated with it although it will greatly save taxpayer dollars by moving all permitting under one Department (DNR Aquaculture Division). It will save oyster farmers and restoration advocates money as well.

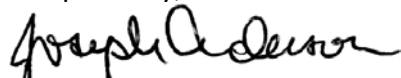
Bob Paul
Director

John Spinicchia
Director

Elaine Szymkowiak
Director

We request the Committee return a FAVORABLE report on SB0442.

Respectfully,



Joseph Anderson, president