



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Dana Stein
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Support – House Bill 799 – Aquaculture Leases and Shellfish Nursery Operations – Wetlands

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

The department supports House Bill 799. The bill would ease the restrictions on leaseholders from using shellfish aquaculture equipment on their docks, by exempting them from having to obtain Tidal Wetlands License authorization approval from the Board of Public Works for these activities and equipment.

This legislation will help resolve a longstanding permitting issue that has created operational difficulties for shellfish aquaculture businesses and restricted these activities and equipment to upland sites. The department plans to consult with the Aquaculture Coordinating Council and shellfish aquaculture industry members and stakeholders to clearly identify and describe the activities and use of equipment associated with shellfish aquaculture leasing, which are approved for use on a dock.

The department anticipates the bill would streamline the aquaculture approval process and provide for a more efficient approval process, and help this burgeoning industry. For these reasons, the department respectfully requests the committee to grant HB 799 a favorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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