



Testimony in Support of House Bill 800– Aquaculture Leases – Marking and Recording Requirements – Mobile Application

February 17, 2021

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB800** – *requiring the Department of Natural Resources to develop a mobile application for use by an individual while on the waters of the State...* – on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with 3,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration and education.

HB800 will require the Department of Natural Resources to develop a phone app that displays the location of various regulatory areas, including oyster leases, sanctuaries, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Protection Zones, clam areas, and others. This app would allow the user to see their location relative to these regulatory areas in real time. **This will greatly benefit all users, including watermen, Natural Resource Police, and the general public in knowing if they are in a regulated area or not.**

ShoreRivers has been advocating for enhanced SAV Protection Zones throughout the past few legislative sessions. Specifically, in addition to requesting for annual updates and buffers to be included to the zones, ShoreRivers also advocates for a smart phone app that would give watermen the ability to better know where SAV Protection Zones are in real time. SAV is a critical part of the Chesapeake ecosystem, providing food, habitat and oxygen, while also absorbing nutrients, trapping sediment, and preventing erosion. Maryland has committed to increasing SAV habitat to 185,000 acres through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. **HB800 will make that goal more attainable by modernizing SAV Protection Zone mapping, by helping watermen better know where the zones are, and by helping enforcement agencies better monitor and enforce the zones.**

For the reason and the examples described above, ShoreRivers urges the committee to vote favorably for **House Bill 800**.

Sincerely,

Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper on behalf of:

ShoreRivers

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

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