

*Joe Anderson*  
*President*

February 8, 2021

*Patricia Samford*  
*Vice President*

Subject: HB0779: Aquaculture Leases and Shellfish Nursery Operations - Wetlands  
Environmental and Transportation Committee – February 17th, 2021

*Larry O'Brien*  
*Secretary*

FAVORABLE

*Chandler Wyatt*  
*Treasurer*

Dear Delegate Barve and members of the Committee,

*Melina Cavathas*  
*Director*

*Captain Will Gates*  
*Director*

We request a favorable finding for HB0779, 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, HB0779, 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.

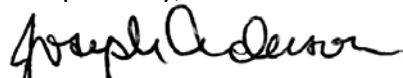
*Bob Paul*  
*Director*

*John Spinicchia*  
*Director*

*Elaine Szymkowiak*  
*Director*

We request the Committee return a FAVORABLE report on HB0779.

Respectfully,



Joseph Anderson, president