



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

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March 24, 2021

The Honorable Kumar 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 – Senate Bill 350 – Natural Resources – Aquaculture – Leases***

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources offers its full support for Senate Bill 350. As amended, this bill would expand the existing demonstration lease program to allow private entities a limited-acre and short-term aquaculture lease to explore the commercial potential of culturing aquatic plant species in Maryland, while limiting those leases to non-invasive plants.

The department has been approached by several individuals over the years who showed interest in experimenting with the feasibility of growing various aquatic plant species for commercial purposes. The potential markets of aquatic plants include agriculture and the medical technology industry. Current Maryland law only allows for shellfish aquaculture experimentation by educational and non-profit institutions for conservation, educational, or ecological purposes.

The passage and enactment of this proposed legislation telegraphs to the national aquaculture industry that “Maryland is Open for Business” and opens the door to innovation and economic opportunity in our state’s industry.

Respectfully submitted,

James W. McKittrick  
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services