

Senate Bill 979

Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoal

Date: March 16, 2022

To: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: Support

From: Kenneth B. Lewis, M.D.

I strongly SUPPORT Senate Bill 979 that will permanently protect Man O War Shoal from destructive dredging for buried oyster shell as proposed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

This is essentially a marine environmental protection issue that will protect this upper Chesapeake Bay unique underwater area that has been used in a non-destructive way by generations of Marylanders. As noted in earlier testimony the vast majority of a diverse group of citizens who utilize the area have testified against dredging.

Since it is unseen beneath the water the environmental, social and economic benefits of the destruction of this common property resource are not widely appreciated by many citizens. If this were a discussion of a quite visible extractive operation such as strip mining for coal, or creating a stone or gravel mine on public land there would likely be a very loud negative reaction.

There is no public imperative for dredging buried oyster shell from MOW. Oyster restoration in our five designated sanctuaries is proceeding as planned, oyster aquaculture businesses are increasing and reported wild oyster harvest this season is predicted to increase substantially.

I urge you to give SB 979 a FAVORABLE vote and preserve this unique Chesapeake Bay area for future generations. Please contact Kenneth B. Lewis, M.D, at kenbonnyl@verizon.net or 410-812-1324 for questions