

JOHNNY RAY SALLING
Legislative District 6
Baltimore County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 321
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3587 · 301-858-3587
800-492-7122 Ext. 3587
JohnnyRay.Salling@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 15, 2022

Education, Health, and Environment Committee

Re: SB979- Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I would like to ask for your support for this bill which would prohibit the dredging of Man-O-War Shoals.

Man-O-War is known as one of the best fishing spots for perch and striped bass, and dredging will very likely have a negative impact on the quality of fishing in that area as well as the natural habitat. The dredging program in the upper bay started in the early 1960's and continued until 2006. However, if this program was so successful, we have to ask why have we run out of areas to dredge and why are oyster levels at such a historic low? I do not deny that there are other contributing factors to the low oyster population, but the fact remains that many decades of dredging and millions of dollars spent in moving shell from one place to another has not resulted in a robust and thriving oyster community. The idea of dredging is a short sighted solution to a long term problem, because if you take more shell than you are replacing, eventually you run out of shell. After the shell is gone there is no more shell, the shoal is destroyed, and the marine life is gone.

We need to have a holistic approach that includes using other sources of substrate and having robust recycling and reclamation programs. We should not destroy one habitat to try to create another.

I ask for your support on a favorable vote for this bill.

Sincerely,

Senator Johnny Ray Salling