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March 1, 2023

RE: SB 434

Natural Resources – Restorative Aquaculture Pilot Program

Hello and thank you for considering the subject Bill which Hollywood Oyster Company strongly supports.

Hollywood Oyster, Hollywood, St. Mary's County, MD employs 12 full time people and farms millions of oysters on 5 leases totaling almost 20 acres on the Patuxent River near Solomons Island.

We ship Maryland Farmed Oysters nationally under our Sweet Jesus and Hollywood Oyster brands.

We have invested heavily in a packing house, delivery truck and have thousands of grow cages. We commenced operations in 2010 as a result of the new aquaculture legislation and have tried to be a model participant.

Oyster aquaculture is in the top tier of sustainable farming methods. Hollywood Oyster is additionally sustainable for electricity; producing more than we consume with our solar farm.

Oyster aquaculture has significant bio diversity benefits. All of our 20 acres of leased area are sandy bottom that historically supported grasses but that prior to farming were deserts. Literally huge areas of river/bay with no area for crab or fish to hide or feed.

By introducing cage on bottom in large areas we create habitat for the entire food chain within each cage and among the cages for safe areas for crabs and fish. Our water teems with minnows and our skies and waters teem with their predators as part of the increased habitat.

Thus we create significant ecological benefits to the Chesapeake Bay by our activities yet are not rewarded financially for those efforts. This is an area of opportunity to support aquaculture as well as a financial methodology to support technical and other best practices to increase these ecological benefits.

Thank you for your attention
Grow more oysters!
Tal