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**Testimony encouraging a FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS report on Senate Bill 437  
– Aquaculture – Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission, Oyster Advisory Commission, and  
Leases**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
March 2, 2023

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB437**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Arundel Rivers is a member of the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance, a broad coalition of non-profits, community organizations, oyster growers, academic institutions, and business owners with the shared goal of adding 10 billion oysters in the Bay by the year 2025. With a focus on expanding aquaculture, increased oyster restoration, and science-based fishery management, the Chesapeake Oyster Alliance aims to accelerate oyster recovery efforts and in so doing the recovery of the Chesapeake Bay.

Senate Bill 437 implements key regulatory reforms to help grow Maryland's aquaculture industry, including addressing lengthy lease processing timelines, lease protest procedures, and ensuring right-sized representation on advisory commissions. **Arundel Rivers strongly supports this bill with an amendment to maintain the number of watermen representation on advisory commissions in addition to adding the new representatives from the aquaculture industry.**

Arundel Rivers Federation encourages the expansion of aquaculture, a key component of long-term oyster recovery in the Chesapeake Bay, and respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS REPORT on HB631.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation