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RE: SB 0437

Aquaculture - Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission, Oyster Advisory Commission, and Leases

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.

When someone asks me what it's like to get an aquaculture lease in Maryland I put my fingers in the shape of a pistol and point it at my head.

It is not the paperwork or requirements - it is the length, process and distraction required to personally shepherd the paperwork through the steps – over years - to achieve progress/success.

The details of the bill are needed to support more leasing activity to grow the industry which also increases habitat diversity and their ecological benefits.

The additional seats on the Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commission is straightforward – oyster aquaculture is a significant and growing proportion of oysters harvested in Maryland and farmers are not close to proportionally represented.

Thank you for your attention.
Grow more oysters!

Tal