



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Secretary
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

January 23, 2024

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 303 – First Reader

SHORT TITLE: Aquaculture - Definition of Shellfish - Alteration

DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION

The definition of shellfish under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-11A-13 needs to be broadened to include species such as scallops. Without expanding the definition, the state remains vulnerable to imported shellfish with possible diseases which could be brought in and planted by leaseholders. By broadening the definition, the agency would alleviate future issues if other species begin to spread in their natural ranges due to climate change or other environmental events.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

After the major overhaul of Subtitle 11A in 2009, the Department declared bay scallops as in need of conservation as their numbers had increased and the agency wanted to proceed with caution. With the expansion of coastal scallops in the Coastal Bays since that time, this has become an issue of fish health concern that cannot be addressed until the definition is expanded to include scallops or other shellfish under the definition of shellfish pertaining to importation (in terms of leases).

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would expand the definition of shellfish under the Natural Resources Article, Section 4-11A-13, to a broader classification of mollusk to include species such as scallops.

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