

DANA JONES
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Vice Chair, Health and Social Services

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Vice Chair, Anne Arundel
County Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony of Delegate Dana Jones
Before the Environment and Transportation Committee
In Support of HB 857
Shellfish Aquaculture - Harvest Hours
February 23st, 2024

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I come before you today to introduce HB 857, Shellfish Aquaculture - Harvest Hours. A simple bill, that will give the Department of Natural Resources and the Aquaculture Coordinating Council, the flexibility to set harvest times that are best for Maryland's privately cultivated shellfish aquaculturists.

In May of last year, I was appointed by Speaker Adrienne Jones as the House member of the Aquaculture Coordinating Council. The basic charge of the Council is to advance Maryland's Aquaculture industry throughout Maryland. As part of this work, the Council establishes a number of workgroups to address possible solutions to issues faced by aquaculturists. HB 857 is a result of the outcome of the Summer Harvest Workgroup in the Aquaculture Coordinating Council.

The issue discussed in this workgroup was the truncated harvest times in the summer. As the industry has grown, year round harvesting operations have become common. However during the summer, because of the heat and to control illness, the harvest is subject to additional constraints from the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. A consequence of these controls are shortened harvest windows in the summer months, limiting the economic viability of privately cultivated shellfish leases during this time. In certain periods, there can be less than 4 hours allotted to leaseholders to harvest. HB 857 will allow the Department of Natural Resources, in consultation with the ACC, the regulatory flexibility to address this issue. As you will see in your floor system, this bill has received a letter of support from the Aquaculture Coordinating Council. Importantly, as outlined in the supporting testimony from the ACC, the Maryland

Department of Health, Environment, and Natural Resources administrate the National Shellfish Sanitation Program for the State and all have representatives appointed to the ACC.

With that, I humbly request a favorable report on HB 857.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dana Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Dana Jones