



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 837 Oyster Restoration – Use of Federal Funds – Prohibition

Date: March 4, 2025	Position: UNFAVORABLE
To: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee	From: Dr. Allison Colden, MD Executive Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 837 which would prohibit the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) from utilizing federal funds for oyster restoration in state oyster sanctuaries.

Since 2011, more than \$87 million of state and federal funding has been invested in Maryland's oyster sanctuaries. By all metrics, the overwhelming majority of reefs and tributaries are considered a success, with high oyster abundance, reproducing populations, and more than 1,000 acres of high-quality oyster habitat. These restored reefs, when fully mature, are estimated to contribute more than \$22 million annually to Talbot and Dorchester counties through enhanced productivity of blue crab and white perch fisheries, representing a significant return on investment for communities surrounding oyster restoration projects.

Federal investment has been key to Maryland's oyster restoration success. In addition to providing grants to state agencies, non-profit organizations, and volunteer community groups, federal partners are responsible for coordinating partners, developing restoration blueprints, conducting pre-construction surveys, and monitoring the outcomes of oyster restoration projects. Federal investments also support production of oyster larvae at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science Horn Point Oyster Hatchery, which is the largest producer of oyster larvae for restoration, aquaculture and the public fishery. Without these investments, all oyster sectors would suffer.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on SB 837.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.