

Testimony of the Advocates for Herring Bay (AHB)¹
Regarding SB 837 – Oyster Restoration – Use of Federal Funds – Prohibition
Submitted by Kathleen Gramp, February 28, 2025

Oppose

Herring Bay is a sub-bay on the western shore of the Chesapeake that has a rich history of aquatic abundance (see Map 1). Given its ecological potential and protected status as an Oyster Sanctuary, the Advocates for Herring Bay (AHB) launched a collaborative effort in 2019 to kick-start the revival of oysters in the Sanctuary. Over the last five years, community volunteers have raised money and invested hundreds of hours hauling, planting, and monitoring the progress of juvenile oysters in the Sanctuary.



The good news: oyster restoration works in Herring Bay. In 2022, the number of live oysters on our small reef was well above restoration targets, averaging 236 per square meter compared to a goal of 50.² Those oysters are forming three-dimensional structures that will provide habitat for crabs and fish, species important to Herring Bay's commercial crabbers and recreational fishing industry. The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center confirmed the reef's progress in their review of underwater imagery taken in 2023 (see Attachment 1).

That success has been a springboard for new restoration initiatives:

- last year, we launched a “Happy Oysters, Happy Bay” fundraising campaign to plant several million more juvenile oysters in the Herring Bay Sanctuary in 2025, and
- in October 2024, Maryland's Oyster Advisory Committee selected Herring Bay as one of the next sites for large-scale restoration by state and federal partners. Their decision reflects Sanctuary's extensive, high-quality oyster bottom; relatively low risk of disease; adjacency to the mainstem of the Bay; and other conditions suitable for successful restoration.

SB 837 seeks to arbitrarily cut off federal funds for Maryland's oyster restoration projects for the next five years. At a time of fiscal austerity, we need to leverage all available resources to guarantee continued progress toward sustaining oysters and other living resources in the Chesapeake Bay. We urge you to stay steadfast in your commitment to Marylanders' shared goal of a healthy Chesapeake. **Please reject SB 837 and issue an unfavorable report on the bill.**



¹ The Advocates for Herring Bay (AHB) is a community-based environmental group in Anne Arundel County.

² See [AHB Oyster Monitoring Report](#), January 2023.

Advocates for Herring Bay
Testimony on SB 837
Attachment 1

