

This letter is to express our opposition to House Bill 0506) and to strongly recommend that it be examined more closely during the upcoming summer session. We believe the current wording of this bill is confusing and lacks the necessary clarity to effectively achieve its stated goals.

While we wholeheartedly support the bill's intentions regarding farming plans, water quality initiatives, and aquaculture development, we are deeply troubled by the fisheries management aspects embedded within HB0506.

Our primary concerns include:

- **Lack of Clarity and Intention:** The wording of the fisheries section of HB0506 is vague and ambiguous. It doesn't clearly articulate the state's intentions regarding fisheries management, leading to uncertainty and potential misinterpretation.
- **Overruling Existing Management Bodies:** We are apprehensive that HB0506, as written, could potentially overrule the established authority of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC).
- **Lack of Stakeholder Input:** We are unaware of any significant input from commercial or recreational fishermen during the drafting process of this bill. This lack of consultation raises serious concerns about the bill's practicality and relevance to the realities of the fishing industry.
- **Unnecessarily Broad Scope:** HB0506 attempts to manage three distinct and diverse ecosystems – the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the Coastal bays and their tributaries, and the Atlantic Ocean – under a single framework. Each of these ecosystems presents unique challenges and requires tailored management strategies based on scientific data and local knowledge. Attempting to manage them collectively under a uniform approach is unlikely to be effective and could potentially harm each individual ecosystem and its respective fisheries and fishermen.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Furthermore, the bill suffers from a significant lack of clarity regarding its implementation process. Without a clear roadmap for how these regulations will be enforced, how data will be collected, and how its success will be measured, we fear that the fisheries portion of HB0506 will create unnecessary confusion, redundancy, and uncertainty for all involved.
- **Stuffed concept:** The bill is essentially trying to stuff a fisheries management bill in the middle of 3 other concepts.

While we understand and appreciate the intent behind the bill to ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries in Chesapeake Bay, we believe that its current form is overly broad and counterproductive to achieving its intended goals.

Therefore, we respectfully urge a thorough review of HB0506 with the possibility of separating this overwhelming bill into several different bills, in particular, separating out the fisheries management components, and consider revisions that address our concerns..

Again, we would like to express our opposition to HB0506. Thank you for your time and consideration

Sincerely,

Earl R Gwin, Jr

President

Waterman's Association of Worcester County, MD