



Maryland Department of Agriculture

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Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
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Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: March 10th, 2026

BILL NUMBER: SB 916
BILL TITLE: Workgroup on Seafood Marketing
MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter in support of *Senate Bill 916 - Workgroup on Seafood Marketing*, which examines the challenges and opportunities in the State of Maryland related to seafood marketing, with a final report due to the Governor and certain committees of the General Assembly on recommendations and findings of the workgroup.

The Seafood Marketing Program, housed within the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Marketing and Agricultural Development Section, works in tandem with the Governor-appointed Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission to promote local products and strengthen market access across retail, restaurant, and institutional sectors. Responsible for an industry that contributes an estimated \$600 million annually to the state's economy, the program fosters a sustainable seafood sector by raising public awareness and highlighting the economic importance of Maryland's harvesters and processors. These vital promotional and marketing efforts are uniquely supported by the Seafood Marketing Fund, which consists of surcharges on commercial watermen and seafood dealer licenses collected by the Department of Natural Resources and deposited at MDA. This collaborative framework ensures that high-quality, Maryland-caught and grown products remain competitive while supporting statewide employment and economic development.

SB 916 provides a worthwhile review of the Maryland seafood industry by examining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. This evaluation will help ensure the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of the industry. MDA supports SB 916 as a practical and collaborative step toward strengthening the marketing of Maryland seafood, and respectfully requests a favorable report.

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