

Senator Brian J. Feldman
Chair: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing this letter in strong support of naming Megalodon as the Maryland State Shark. Megalodon is an iconic extinct apex predator that captures public and professional interest, as the largest shark to ever live. Megalodon had a relatively global distribution, making it known worldwide, with a substantial fossil record within Maryland. People from around the world visit Maryland in hopes of finding large, well-preserved Megalodon teeth. Designating Megalodon as the Maryland State Shark will likely be another draw to increase tourism in our local parks and museums. Undoubtedly, institutions such as the Calvert Marine Museum, the Maryland Science Center, the Natural History Society of Maryland, and the various parks with fossil resources will tap into this new state symbol as a promotional tool for public education.

Maryland already recognizes two different fossil state symbols: the Maryland State Fossil (*Ecphora gardnerae gardnerae*) and the Maryland State Dinosaur (*Astrodon johnstoni*). Adding Megalodon as another state symbol would make Maryland the first state to have a State Shark as a symbol, and the only state to have three different state symbols represented by fossils. These state symbols help to promote paleontology as a field and inspire curiosity. Further, they remind us of the natural and cultural significance of fossils.

As you all surely know, Marylanders take a lot of pride in our state and our state symbols. Naming Megalodon as the Maryland State Shark will give us another accolade to show our appreciation for the amazing heritage we all share.

Sincerely,

 Feb. 10, 2026

Dr. Victor J. Perez
Paleontology Manager
Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission