



ANNE ARUNDEL WATERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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FAVORABLE

SENATE BILL 875

Oysters – Rotational Harvest – Pilot Program

This written testimony is on behalf of Anne Arundel County Watermen's Association and the families who depend on Maryland's oyster fishery.

Maryland watermen have always supported rebuilding the oyster population. In fact, when the sanctuary program was created, watermen gave up access to nearly 25 to 30 percent of Maryland's historic oyster harvest bottom in support of restoration.

That was a major sacrifice by our industry.

Since then, millions of taxpayer dollars have been invested in oyster restoration, yet some sanctuary areas have not been planted or actively maintained in decades. When that happens, those areas can become silted over and may no longer function as productive oyster reefs.

We believe good fisheries management should be adaptive and accountable. Sanctuaries that are not being actively restored or producing results should be reviewed to determine whether they are meeting their intended purpose.

Maryland's watermen want to be partners in rebuilding the oyster population while also preserving the working waterfronts that support our communities.

Thank you for your favorable vote on Senate Bill 875.