



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary

Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading
Industry

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building

50 Harry S Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

mda.maryland.gov

410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington

410.841.5846 Fax

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

Date: March 4th, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HB 1212
BILL TITLE: Workgroup on Seafood Marketing
MDA POSITION: SUPPORT

The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) respectfully submits this letter in support of *House Bill 1212 - 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.

HB 1212 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 HB 1212 as a practical and collaborative step toward strengthening the marketing of Maryland seafood, and respectfully requests a favorable report.

Contact: Harrison Palmer, Chief of Staff
harrisonb.palmer@maryland.gov | (410) 980-9887