



House Bill 0784

Shellfish Aquaculture – Harvest Hours

Date: February 20, 2026	Position: FAVORABLE
To: Environment and Transportation Committee	From: Dan Worrell <i>Chair</i>

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council (ACC) **SUPPORTS** House Bill (HB) 0784. HB 0784 would change an existing sunset from Chapter 113 (2024) of Maryland law under Natural Resources Article, Section 4-11A-10 from June 30, 2027 to June 30, 2030.

Natural Resources Article, Section 4-11A-10(c-1)(2) provides the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) authority to grant permission to the holder of a shellfish aquaculture lease, where aquaculture activities do not harm submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), to continue to placing gear and shellfish within at least 10% of the area of the lease that SAV exists.

The original legislation that granted DNR authority to grant these permissions required a review of impacts on farm operations and SAV to further understand the complex interaction between SAV and aquaculture activities following previous recommendations from the ACC. While shellfish aquaculture and SAV have expanded in the years since, few instances where this authority could be exercised have occurred leading to limited information on these interactions.

Approval of HB0784 would allow DNR to continue to collect this valuable information and allow the ACC's newly formed SAV Workgroup to review new studies on these interactions within Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Coastal Bays, hear from industry and SAV experts, and make policy recommendations to maximize the continued expansion of both SAV and aquaculture.

The Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 0784.

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