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Health and Government Operations
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Public Health and
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Health Occupations and
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony

HB 1212 Maryland Seafood Marketing Institute

Environment and Transportation Committee

03/04/2026

What This Bill Does

HB1212 establishes a joint workgroup convened by the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Natural Resources to examine challenges and opportunities related to seafood marketing in the State. The workgroup will assess barriers facing Maryland's seafood industry, identify strategies to strengthen marketing efforts, and evaluate opportunities to better promote locally harvested seafood. By December 1, 2026, the Secretaries are required to submit a report to the Governor and relevant committees of the General Assembly outlining the workgroup's findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislative actions.

Why We Need This Bill

Maryland's seafood industry is a vital part of the State's economy, cultural heritage, and coastal communities, supporting thousands of jobs and sustaining generations of watermen and seafood businesses. Despite the high quality and sustainability of Maryland seafood, many local producers face persistent challenges related to marketing, distribution, and competition with out-of-state and imported products. Limited and uncoordinated marketing infrastructure often makes it difficult for producers to effectively reach consumers and capture the full value of their products.

This bill is needed to address these challenges through a coordinated, cross-agency approach. By establishing a joint workgroup between the Secretaries of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the State can bring together key stakeholders to evaluate barriers, identify opportunities, and develop practical, data-driven strategies to strengthen seafood marketing. The workgroup's findings and recommendations will provide the General Assembly with a clear roadmap for future policy

action that supports local producers, promotes Maryland seafood as a premium product, and ensures the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of this critical industry.

I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable vote on **HB1212**.