



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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## Senate Bill 558 Chesapeake Bay Enhancement Program - Established

**Date:** April 1, 2026

**To:** Environment & Transportation Committee

**Position:** FAVORABLE w/ AMENDMENT

**From:** Dr. Allison Colden,  
MD Executive Director

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 558 WITH AMENDMENTS**. SB 558 provides a mandated appropriation from the Transportation Trust Fund annually for oyster propagation and replenishment. Amendments passed by the Senate alter the funding amount from \$2 million to \$2.25 million annually and require at least \$1.5 million to be used for oyster propagation and replenishment projects. The amended bill also establishes a financial assistance fund for watermen.

While CBF supports SB 558 and has no objections to the funding levels or assistance program, the current funding use language is too restrictive. **We urge the Committee to adopt amendments which provide flexibility for DNR to determine the highest need for this funding on an annual basis defined by an annual work plan that is shared with relevant stakeholder advisory committees.** This would align the bill with how this program has functioned previously and provide a means for DNR to invest in oyster sanctuaries that are impacted by transportation and dredging projects.

### Suggested Amendments:

ON PAGE 1, LINE 21, AFTER “PROPAGATION,” INSERT “RESEARCH, DEMONSTRATION, RESTORATION”

ON PAGE 2, LINE 10, STRIKE “(D)” AND INSERT, “(D) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL DRAFT AN ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR THE PROGRAM DETAILING THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS. THE WORK PLAN WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ON THE DEPARTMENT’S WEBSITE IN ADDITION TO BEING SHARED WITH RELEVANT ADVISORY BODIES TO THE DEPARTMENT.”

**CBF urges the Committee’s FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS report on SB 558.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org)

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*