

HB0097 (House Bill) Support March 17, 2026

Megalodon, Maryland State Shark

March 13, 2026

From: Stephen J. Godfrey Ph.D.

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Home address: 2710 Hatteras Lane, Lusby, Maryland 20657

To: Delegate Melissa Wells, Chair

House Government, Labor and Elections Committee

145 Lowe House Office Building

Annapolis, MD 21401

To the Honorable Chair Wells, Vice-Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephen Godfrey, and I am the Curator of Paleontology at the Maryland Center for Paleontology at the Calvert Marine Museum in Solomons, and I am joined by my daughter Zoey who is here to help hold up our megalodon poster.

I present in support of HB0097 that would designate the extinct giant shark Megalodon as Maryland's State Shark.

At nearly 80 feet long, MEGALODON was the largest shark that ever lived.

Its fossilized teeth have been found in 7 counties in Maryland. Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Prince Georges, and St. Mary's County.

It lived for more than 10 million years in the Atlantic Ocean that flooded over the eastern half of Maryland.

Remarkably, no shark has ever been designated as a State Shark.

There are many living and extinct species of sharks known from Maryland, but the colossal shark MEGALODON is the most iconic!

We did not choose MEGALODON because it is extinct and represented only by fossils, but rather because it is a shark...

MEGALODON reminds us of the importance played by prehistoric and modern sharks in shaping both past and present marine ecosystems.

And MEGALODON is such an excellent educational tool.

As evidence of that, I would like to conclude by reading, with permission, part of an unsolicited email about this bill from Ms. Anna Shay, a 4th Grade Teacher at Beltsville Academy, which is part of PG County Public Schools.

“The students began their research today, using National Geographic and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, learning about the megalodon shark and its rich connections to Maryland, even PG County! They were fascinated by fossilized remains of this shark being discovered so close to their communities.”

MEGALODON AS OUR STATE SHARK: It’s about choosing state icons that represent the great superlatives about this place we call home.

I would like to thank Delegate Morgan for sponsoring this Bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Godfrey". The signature is stylized with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Stephen J. Godfrey