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Seeking the Green Party nomination for Governor
HB 97
FWA

The Calvert Marine Museum houses more than 1,700 fossilized megalodon teeth, including the only associated dentition of the species ever found in the state. Fossilized teeth turn up in seven Maryland counties: Calvert, Anne Arundel, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Prince George's, and St. Mary's. According to the Smithsonian Institution, Maryland was one of a handful of discovered megalodon nursery habitats anywhere in the world. Baby megalodons grew up here. This bill gets the big idea right. The megalodon belongs in Maryland's official symbols.

My amendment is one word. Designate the megalodon as the State **Historic** Shark, not the State Shark.

The megalodon has been extinct for at least 3.6 million years.

Why the distinction matters

The Department of Natural Resources manages 41 species of coastal sharks in Maryland waters. At least 12 visit the Chesapeake Bay. Sandbar sharks use the Bay as one of the most important nursery areas on the East Coast. Bull sharks swim up the Patuxent River. Sand tigers patrol the lower Bay at night. According to DNR, there are no recorded shark attacks in the Chesapeake Bay.

These are living animals in a living ecosystem. Designating an extinct species as the State Shark closes the door on all 41 of them.

Maryland already knows how to do this

Maryland has a State Dinosaur: *Astrodon johnstoni*, designated in 1998. It has a State Fossil Shell: *Ecphora gardnerae*, designated in 1994. Both are extinct. Both use categories that signal their prehistoric nature. Nobody proposed calling *Astrodon* the State Reptile, because there are living reptiles in Maryland.

Maryland also has a State Fish (rockfish), a State Crustacean (blue crab), and a State Reptile (diamondback terrapin). When the General Assembly designates a living animal category, it picks a living species. "Shark" is a living animal category. The megalodon belongs in a historic one.

Climate disruption was among the forces that drove the megalodon to extinction. The living sharks in Maryland waters face the same category of threat from warming, pollution, and overfishing. Appendix C details the science.

The amendment

Amend Section 7-310 to read: "THE MEGALODON (OTODUS MEGALODON) IS THE STATE HISTORIC SHARK."

One word. The megalodon gets its recognition. The General Assembly preserves its ability to return next session and designate a living State Shark from among the 40 species in Maryland waters right now. No state in the country has designated a state shark. Maryland would be the first. It should get this right.

I have attached three appendices. Appendix A is a guide to the living sharks of Maryland. Appendix B describes the youth and scientific interest in sharks that a future living State Shark designation could build on. Appendix C details the environmental threats those sharks face today.

I encourage this committee to provide a favorable with amendments report on HB 97.