

HB0097 (House Bill) Support March 17, 2026

## Megalodon, Maryland State Shark

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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:

I write in support of HB0097 (sponsored by Delegate Morgan) and its companion bill SB0135 (sponsored by Senator Bailey). These bills would designate the extinct giant shark Megalodon as Maryland's State Shark.



*Figure 1. Life restoration of the extinct megatooth shark, megalodon. Art by Tim Scheirer.*

No shark has ever been designated as a State Shark.

There are many living and extinct species of sharks known from Maryland.

In addition to the many species of sharks that live seasonally in both the Chesapeake Bay and along our Atlantic Coast, there are more than 60 species of extinct sharks known from their fossilized teeth found in Maryland.

That being the case, here at the Calvert Marine Museum, we think it's time for Maryland to lead the way and designate the first, and our own State Shark.

Of all the sharks to choose from, the colossal shark MEGALODON is the most iconic (Figure 1).

It is thought that they could have grown to be nearly 80 feet long, the largest shark that ever lived. We like the adage, GO BIG OR GO HOME. So, for us, megalodon is the obvious choice.

The fossilized teeth of megalodon (Figures 2 and 3) have been found in at least 7 counties in Maryland (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Caroline, Charles, Dorchester, Prince George's and St. Mary's Counties). No modern shark lives in Maryland waters year-round. Megalodon called Maryland home for more than 10 million years.

Megalodon reminds us of our rich fossil history...and it is also a reminder of the importance played by prehistoric and modern sharks in shaping both past and present ecosystems. Sharks are like canaries in a coal mine. If as top predators, shark populations and species diversity are great, then that means the rest of the marine ecosystem is doing well.

We did not choose megalodon as our candidate to become our State Shark because it is extinct and represented only by fossils, but rather because it is a shark...the largest and most iconic shark of all time! Because it is extinct does not make it any less of a shark.

If we didn't go with megalodon, which of the 30 living species of shark species known from the Chesapeake Bay and our coastal Atlantic shore would we choose? Suppose we went with the chain dogfish or the bull shark...those would be cool, but they lack the gravitas and popular appeal as compared to that of megalodon. Because we chose the Baltimore Oriole as our State Bird, did not render as insignificant all the other species of birds that call Maryland home. Just the opposite should happen. By choosing megalodon as our State Shark, should help bring attention to all sharks, both living and extinct that call or have called Maryland home.



*Figure 2. A large tooth from Maryland from the megatooth shark, Otodus megalodon (aka Megalodon). Photo by S. Godfrey.*



*Figure 3. Calvert Marine Museum Paleontology Collections Manager, John Nance with the only associated set of megalodon teeth ever found in Maryland. (An associated set of teeth are those from one shark that died, preserving most of its teeth in one place, as opposed to those teeth that were shed naturally throughout its life, the usual teeth that are found.) Photo by S. Godfrey.*

We have this one chance to be the first to designate a State Shark, so let's go big. If we don't, there are other States that could do that. Megalodon as our State Shark would be something we could all be proud of and megalodon is such an excellent educational tool.

The following is part of an unsolicited email in response to this Bill from Ms. Anna Shay, a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at Beltsville Academy, one 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. We covered so many cross-curricular connections from the senate as a governing body, the history of the megalodon shark, and what a formal and persuasive essay looks like!*

*I cannot overstate my appreciation for all of you being so helpful and active in the education of my students. Making learning authentic through real-world experiences, connections, and projects is so important to our classroom community — and (that) is what makes learning so (much) fun! It means the world to me, and to them."*

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

The following are some examples of the great publicity to date, re having Megalodon as our State Shark!

<https://www.chesapeakebaymagazine.com/megalodon-for-state-shark/>

WMAR-2 <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/yBIQZjkj9nM>

<https://thebaynet.com/calvert-marine-museum-supports-designation-of-megalodon-as-marylands-state-shark/>

[https://www.wboc.com/news/maryland-s-megalodon-lawmakers-propose-prehistoric-behemoth-as-official-state-shark/article\\_9b305401-7334-4fb0-983c-911a63229fe5.html](https://www.wboc.com/news/maryland-s-megalodon-lawmakers-propose-prehistoric-behemoth-as-official-state-shark/article_9b305401-7334-4fb0-983c-911a63229fe5.html)

[Megalodon: What Happened to the Ocean's Fiercest Predator? | HISTORY](#)

<https://www.popsoci.com/environment/megalodon-state-shark-maryland/>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/megalodons-went-extinct-millions-of-years-ago-the-prehistoric-predator-could-become-marylands-official-state-shark-180988108/>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/proposed-megalodon-bills-maryland-ocean-calvert-state-shark/>

The Calvert Marine Museum would like to thank Marianne Harms, Senator Jack Bailey, Delegate Todd Morgan, and their respective staff for their help in this attempt to designate megalodon as Maryland's State Shark.

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

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