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**RECREATIONAL ANGLERS WORKING TO CONSERVE, PROMOTE, AND
ENHANCE MARYLAND'S MARINE RESOURCES**

March 8, 2016

To: Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chair;
Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Committee

Re: **Senate Bill 937** Natural Resources – Sustainable Oyster Harvest Act of 2016

CCA Maryland Position: **Favorable with Amendments**

Coastal Conservation Association Maryland(CCA MD) recommends a favorable report on SB 937, as amended by the bill sponsor.

As a long-standing participant in fisheries management in Maryland, CCA MD supports the use of the best available science as part of a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to achieve the sustainable management of our natural resources. In current statute, §4-215, provides the necessary requirements of an FMP for twenty-four different species, including oysters.

§4-215(e) requires that an FMP shall include:

- (i) The best available estimates of sustainable harvest rates;
- (ii) Indicators that would trigger any tightening or loosening of harvest restrictions

SB 937 instructs the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science(UMCES) to study the sustainable harvest rates for oysters, and provide indicators for determining the proper level of harvest. At this time, DNR does not have this information. DNR is also required by §4-215(e)(iv) to set certain measures if overfishing is occurring. A determination of overfishing is also part of the study proposed by this legislation, and once complete will guide DNR's management decisions to provide a sustainable future for our oyster resource.

The work done by UMCES as proposed by this bill will provide the legally required science that is needed to make sound management decisions for wild oyster management in Maryland. Because of the important economic and ecological value of oysters in Maryland, and the importance of sustainably managing and harvesting oysters, we urge you to support this bill as amended and provide a favorable report.