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

February 27, 2018

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

Re: **SB 777 Aquaculture Leases - Notice - Homeowners Associations**

CCA Maryland Position: **Oppose**

Thanks to the collective efforts of legislators, regulatory agencies, scientists, and many private individuals & companies, Maryland's oyster aquaculture industry has grown considerably over the last many years. This growth has supported an improvement in the economic health of many working waterfronts, and provided many positive ecological benefits by increasing the number of oysters living in leased areas.

The leasing of public bottom is an important privilege provided to citizens seeking to establish an oyster aquaculture operation. A thorough public process exists for the review of aquaculture lease applications. The process requires that all nearby shoreline property owners be notified by DNR when an application is submitted in their area. Adding the notification of homeowners associations is an unnecessary and burdensome step which will not positively benefit the existing public process. Currently, homeowners associations have the ability to find out when lease applications are made, and are welcome to weigh in during the review process.

The economic and ecological benefit that oyster farming provides in Maryland continues to increase. It is anticipated that the value of aquaculture oysters sold will soon surpass that of wild harvest. This is a positive sign that Maryland's aquaculture leasing process is functional at this time.

CCA MD strongly opposes SB 777 and respectfully requests an unfavorable report.

