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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 926 Natural Resources – Oyster Planting- Substrate Material

**CCA Maryland Position: Oppose**

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This bill requires that all oyster plantings in Maryland waters use only native oyster shell unless exempted from the requirement by an extensive, time consuming and expensive approval process. It ignores the scientific data that demonstrates that oyster plantings using granite and environmentally clean crushed concrete are effective alternatives to shell, are less expensive and are widely available.

Not only is the quantity of native oyster shell markedly limited, but it degrades with time and for some uses may require repeated application. In its permit application to dredge Man O War shoal the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reports” the oyster shell half-life typically ranges from 3 to 6 years in the mid-Atlantic estuaries”.

Maryland has had extensive experience with the using dredged fossil oyster shell in the public oyster fishery and its failure to contribute to a sustainable fishery. From 1960 until 2006 DNR dredged more than 185 million bushels of buried fossil oyster shell from deposits in the upper bay and barged them down the bay into more saline water for better spat set and growth to support the oyster industry. When the readily accessible shell deposits were exhausted, and the practice of forever altering the great shoals of the upper bay developed increasing public opposition, the Repletion Program ended. There was no contribution to the development of a sustainable oyster resource from the utilization of fossil shell, a finite public resource.

Requiring the use of only native shell, and creating a more complicated process will limit progress in all areas of oyster restoration, sanctuary development, aquaculture and a sustainable public fishery.

**CCA Maryland strongly opposes SB 926 and respectfully requests an unfavorable report.**