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

2/19/2020

To: Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chairman
Honorable Dana Stein, Vice Chairman
Honorable Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

Re: **House Bill 614** – State Government – Office of the Environmental and Natural Resources Ombudsman – Establishment (Environmental Accountability and Transparency Act)

CCA Maryland Position: Support

CCA Maryland is membership based non-profit organization of recreational anglers and concerned citizens committed to working to conserve, promote and enhance Maryland's marine resources for the benefit of the general public.

CCA Maryland's staff and membership actively engage in supporting sound science-based fisheries management regulations, enhancing oyster habitat and populations, and seeking the thorough enforcement of fisheries regulations.

The most basic concept of natural resource conservation and management systems are that the sovereign holds in trust, our shared public resources. Transparency is vital to maintaining the public's trust in management agencies, and providing opportunities for public engagement in the many issues facing our state's natural resources.

Given reductions in staff and resources in many state agencies, the creation of the Natural Resources Ombudsman, will provide a much-needed resource for the public to access information related the number of violations that are reported, as well as the adjudication of such violations.

For many years, recreational anglers have expressed major concerns with the lack of enforcement of fisheries laws and regulations and/or the limited penalties placed upon those found to violate such rules.

The enforcement of fisheries and natural resources laws and regulations is paramount to the future health and sustainability of our shared resources, and public trust the necessary mission of our government agencies

For these reasons, we respectfully request a FAVORABLE report for HB 614.

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