

Chester River Association * Maryland League of
Conservation Voters * Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy *
South River Federation* West/Rhode Riverkeeper

February 8, 2010

Senate Education, Health and Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support Senate Bill 159, "Oyster Poaching"

Dear Chairman Carter Conway and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters, South River Federation, Chester River Association, Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy, and West/Rhode Riverkeeper are pleased to join with other conservation groups in urging your support of Senate Bill 159, "Oyster Poaching."

SB 159 is a terrific complement to Governor O'Malley's Oyster Plan and would further protect both the oysters and the oystermen. Ninety-nine percent of Maryland's oystermen have lost their jobs because of water pollution and over harvesting. This bill ensures that the remaining one percent of oysterman will not lose their jobs because of the bad behavior of a few oystermen. SB 159 would revoke a license from a person who is cited for unlawfully catching oysters.

In order to preserve the stock of oysters available for future generations of watermen proper regulation needs to exist as well as consequences for the breach of regulations. Oysters and the industry that surrounds them are important to Maryland's economy and the health of its environment.

We wish to thank Senator Frosh for his leadership, the committee for its consideration, and respectfully request a favorable report.