



## **MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

### **LEGISLATIVE COMMENT**

**DATE: January 31, 2018    BILL NO: SB 153**

**SUBJECT:            Income Tax Credit - Oyster Shell Recycling - Sunset Extension**

**COMITTEE:         BUDGET AND TAXATION**

**MDA POSITION:     WRITTEN SUPPORT**

#### **EXPLANATION:**

**The Maryland Department of Agriculture, where Seafood Marketing is now located, is in strong support of Senate Bill 153 to extend the oyster shell recycling tax credit. MDA believes this incentive is necessary to reward those who are good stewards of the resources of the Chesapeake Bay and to make sure oyster recycling continues to expand.**

#### **COMMENT:**

**Many substrates have been tried to encourage oyster spat to attach but there is little success with anything other than what mother nature has provide to us, spent oysters shells. This substrate is important for replenishing the natural oyster bars and to support the growing aquaculture oyster industry.**

**To have any chance of growing to maturity the oyster spat must be raised off the muddy bottom of the Bay or it will smother and die. Having the spat attach to natural oyster shells which are returned to the Bay is a great way to raise the oyster spat off the bottom and increase the chance of an oyster surviving. As you all know, the Bay is markedly cleaner today than it has been in the recent past. Part of that can be attributed to the growing oyster aquaculture industry and the filter feeding habits of growing oysters.**

**Again, the Maryland Department of Agriculture strongly supports SB 153 to extend the oyster shell recycling programs. MDA respectfully requests a favorable report for SB 153.**