**Maryland Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission
Minutes from May 15, 2025 Meeting**

**Commissioners in Attendance:** Stephanie Pazzaglia, Stephan Abel, Stephen Howard, Laura Moreno-Davis, Bill Sieling, Kyle Gilbert, George O’Donnell

**Commissioners Absent:** Jason Ruth, Cassie Shirk, Talmage Petty

**Other Attendees:** Matthew Scales, Mark Powell, Kristin Hanna, Stone Slade, Dan Worrell, Kinsey Tedford

**Opening Remarks** - Stephanie Pazzaglia opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. Minutes from the previous meeting (2/28/25) were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve; Bill Seiling, second Steve Howard.

**Marketing Updates**

Recapped previous campaigns that included Shuck & Stout -February, with a Baltimore Sun Digital Campaign, resulting in 50,000 impressions, with 1,254 clicks. In addition, a Meta campaign, with 13,579 views, with 436 clicks (Feb 18-28th). Chesapeake Oyster Week - Maryland’s Best as the primary sponsor, with 62 restaurants participating from MD, DC, VA, reaching 16 million impressions between social media, earned media, ads and email.

It was also announced we are placing a new tag ling with True Blue, Quality Assured, Taste Approved, with a new video shot, featuring a watermen/crabber, picking house, chef and eating. The video will air on MASN, Food Network, and we are also advertising on 98 Rock and What’s Up.

Presented on website metrics, highlighting length of time on a few of the webpages, including the True Blue landing page, which was #3 most visited from February 1-May 1, with 6,819 views, with a duration of about two minutes and 32 seconds, which shows a vested interest in the topic. During this timeframe as well, Shuck & Stout landing page was the fifth most visited landing page, with 3,630 views, and a duration of one minute and seven seconds. The U.S. still leads as the most visits to Maryland’s Best website, followed by Hong Kong and Germany had more visits than Canada during this timeframe. Social media stats from February 1-May 1, Maryland's Best Facebook received 115,800 views (up 133%), reached 68,500 (up 228%), with 989 link clicks (up 745%), and 460 followers (up 200%). Maryland's Best Instagram received 92,700 views (up 44%), reached 41,900 (up 69%), 49 link clicks (up 69%) and 399 followers (up 32%). Some of the most engaged posts received, as it relates to seafood includes, The Atlantic Chesapeake Oyster reel, the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Resturant Association Restaurant Association of Maryland black seabass cooking competition for the Golden Ticket, and another collaborative post with Oyster Recovery Partnership for Chesapeake Oyster Week.

Matthew Scales also recapped several events/trade shows Maryland’s Best Seafood was involved with and attended, which include, but not limited to, the Ocean City Hotel-Motel-Resturant Association Expo, 2025 Seafood Expo North America, Chesapeake Bay Trust’s panel in “Invasive Blue Catfish,”MoCo Eats Trade Show, the Chesapeake Catfish Cookoff, and the Environment & Transportation Committee’s blue catfish luncheon. Matthew also announced the True Blue partnership with Levy/Orioles, as True Blue crab cakes are now available at the Baltimore Seafood House, section five at Camden Yards. Maryland’s Best, Levy and the Orioles partnered on a media tour with WBAL-TV, WBAL Radio and 98 Rock. On that Saturday evening, a national broadcast of the Orioles game via Fox Sports, the announcers were discussing the True Blue crab cake now available at the ballpark. For True Blue, we’ve had several earned media spots in addition that include Faidley’s, a True Blue member on WBAL-TV, and Luke McFadden and Jimmy’s on WJZ-TV, Where’s Marty Bass with the Luke and Jimmy’s True Blue crab cake available for retail. Of the 17 mentions, that resulted in an audience of 52 million, with a $605,000 publicity value.

Chesapeake Oyster Week had 30 mentions, with an audience of 16 million and a publicity value of $301,000, with spots on 100.7 The Bay, WJZ-TV, and Chesapeake Bay Magazine to name a few.

Other coverage, such as combining seafood, ag and value added products, highlighted National Picnic Day, with all local products including seafood, which resulted in nine mentions, an audience of 51 million and a publicity value of $523,000.

Upcoming campaigns include the re-launch, with new tagline, “Taste Approved, Quality Assured” in June, “Eat Like a Marylander” campaign that launches mid-May through September, focusing on all local products, from seafood, agriculture and value-added products. Finally, the grant we received from the Chesapeake Bay Trust for Oyster Chef and Influencer Tours will take place June 2, 2025.

Kristin Hanna mentioned the launch of the new Maryland’s Best logo, combining a logo for ag and seafood, will be unveiled at the Maryland’s Best Expo in February 2026. The logo discussion had representatives from the seafood and ag industry on the meeting with the agency. The commission will get a preview of the logo at the fall meeting.

**International Seafood Marketing Update, Stone Slade, MDA**

Stone Slade mentioned the Gulf Foods show was a success, with seafood and other products, with buyers already buying items in the millions of dollars. In October, there will be a China and Hong Kong inbound mission to Maryland and Virginia. Stone and Matthew have sent out an email blast with details and registration information. Finally, part of the SUSTA RAPP grant, it will look at blue catfish in the Singapore market, and Stone is talking with Virginia on an Emerging Markets grant for blue catfish.

**New Business**

**Seafood Expo North America -Letter Sent to Partners**

* Regarding products that are not solely seafood (i.e. seafood spices and salsas), it was recommended to have a showcase in the Maryland’s Best 10x10 space.
* Commission approved the letter that went out to partners.

**Where and How to Market Maryland Seafood**

* The commission recommended to market out west, west of Denver, and not going South. Norman McCowan was recommended on what shows to exhibit/attend. Stephanie recommended the best would also be speaking engagements at events to tell the stories of Maryland seafood, particularly wild caught Chesapeake blue catfish and oysters.

 **Commission Updates -Effective July 1, 2025**

* Brook Hayden (Seat #3-CBSIA) and Dan Worrell (Seat #6-Waterman) will be part of the Maryland Seafood Marketing Advisory Commission
* Stephanie Pazzaglia, Chair, will fill seat #8, retail
* Still a vacant waterman seat that needs to be filled.
* Terms that expire, effective 6/30/2026, include seat #11, Consumer, Laura Moreno-Davis and seat #1, CBSIA Tal Petty. The commission was tasked to think about who would be a good replacement for these seats as it looked to send recommendations to the Governor’s Appointments Office.
* Effective at the February 2026 meeting, Stephan Abel will become Chair, with Stephanie Pazzaglia as past chair, and looking for nominations for Chair Elect at the October 2025 commission meeting.

 **Legislative Outlook: LA & GA Seafood Labeling Discussion**

* Stepahnie Pazzaglia opposed this idea, as perhaps crab meat container labeling first, but this could lead to consumers becoming scared/confused where their food is coming from. Stephan Able recommended since this is the first year of the bill in LA, contact them to see how their shrimp industry is being affected, and their restaurants. Maryland’s Best focus on rebranding and new logo, and perhaps look at this in 2027 if it makes sense then, based on feedback from LA.

 **Wind Mills/ MDDNR MOU**

* Stephanie Pazzaglia brought up the Wind Mills being built off the coast of Ocean City and the MOU between MDDNR and Wind Mill.
* Stephanie Pazzaglia, Bill Seiling and other commission members were opposed to the idea of wind mills being built off the coast of Ocean City as it will have a negative affect on the Maryland seafood industry, coming off the coast. Bill Seiling said he would write a letter from CBSIA to President Trump opposing it, as he also sent a letter to President Trump on higher tariffs on Venezuela crab.
* Stepahnie will collect names and whom to write letters to for next steps.

 **Maryland DNR -ElectroFishing**

* MD DNR will be seeking Commercial Fishermen to participate with Catfish Electrofishing fish surveys.

**2025 Governor’s Cookout**

* Matthew mentioned the Governor’s Cookout will be held at MDA’s HQ on July 17, 2025. Commission members should have received a Save the Date, with invitations forthcoming.
* Sponsorship opportunities are also available and need sponsorship to avoid pulling from the seafood funds.

The next meeting will commence Thursday, October 23, 2025, 3-5pm at MDA HQ or virtual option. The other commission meetings are February 19, 2026 and May 21, 2026.

Adjournment - Stephan Abel, first, second by Bill Seiling.