



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Charles Glass, Deputy Secretary

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Cheryl C. Kagan
Vice Chair, Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 437 - Prohibition of Dredging on Man-O-War Shoals

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is providing the following information on Senate Bill 437. The bill would prohibit the department from dredging Man-O-War Shoals and prohibit the reconstituted Oyster Advisory Commission from considering the dredging as a part of its package of consensus recommendations on oyster management.

Shell dredging on Man-O-War shoals is currently proposed in a departmental permit application which has been under review by state and federal permitting agencies (MDE, Corps of Engineers, NOAA, EPA, USFWS) for over two years. The agencies are evaluating environmental impacts, project need, and public comment to decide if the permit should be issued. The permit has gone to the Maryland Board of Public Works and a full report on the project has been submitted to the Board by the Maryland Wetlands Administration. Senate Bill 437 would circumvent and nullify the permit review process by the agencies and the Board of Public Works.

The department has reestablished the Oyster Advisory Commission per Chapters 5 and 9 of 2020 and has been holding regular monthly meetings that will continue through the year. DNR respectfully requests that the General Assembly refrain from any further policy changes that would disrupt the process already in place. Legislation, such as Senate Bill 437, that set guardrails on what the Oyster Advisory Commission can and cannot consider for the future oyster management is extremely disruptive to the trust and goodwill that underpins the larger process.

Thank you for allowing the department to submit to the Committee this information on Senate Bill 437.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. McKitrick
Director, Legislative and Constituent Services

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