



Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

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March 4, 2020

To: House Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

Re: **Support of HB 1434 - Aquaculture Leases - Marking Requirements and Use of Lease - Alterations**

On behalf of our member families, I submit this written testimony in support of HB 1434, legislation that clarifies when a newly approved aquaculture lease must have the corner markers installed. It specifies that markers do not need to be installed until the lease area is actually being used. In addition, the bill clarifies that the owner of a lease has 30 days to replace corner markers that get displaced due to named storms, significant northeaster storm events, icing conditions and criminal act of theft or destruction of property in the lease area. Lastly, the bill would require DNR to allow an oyster lease to not have to work their lease during a year where there is no shellfish larvae or shellfish seed available.

After significant rain event years like in 2018, many of the rivers in the Bay were inundated with extreme amounts of fresh water and in turn reduces the salinity in the water. Because of this, it is very difficult for young oysters to survive and older oyster to grow. This bill would allow an oyster grower to not have to farm their lease during this timeframe and still be in good standing with DNR.

MARYLAND FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS HB 1434 AND REQUEST A FAVORABLE REPORT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colby Ferguson'.

Colby Ferguson
Director of Government Relations

For more information contact Colby Ferguson at (240) 578-0396