

HOUSE BILL 298

M2

9lr1329
CF 9lr2164

By: **Delegates Busch, Bagnall, Barve, Branch, Cain, Dumais, Fraser-Hidalgo, Gaines, Gilchrist, Healey, Holmes, Jones, Lafferty, Luedtke, McIntosh, Stein, and Wilkins**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2019

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Oysters – Tributary–Scale Sanctuaries – Protection and Restoration**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a network of oyster sanctuaries in certain tributaries to
4 the Chesapeake Bay; codifying the boundaries of certain oyster sanctuaries;
5 prohibiting a person from catching oysters in or removing oysters from a certain
6 oyster sanctuary, subject to a certain exception; requiring the Department of Natural
7 Resources, in coordination with certain groups and stakeholders, to develop and
8 implement restoration plans for certain oyster sanctuaries; specifying the required
9 contents of a restoration plan; requiring the Department to report to certain
10 committees of the General Assembly on or before a certain date; requiring the
11 Department, in consultation with certain groups and stakeholders, to finalize certain
12 restoration plans on or before a certain date; requiring the Department to fully
13 implement certain restoration plans on or before a certain date; and generally
14 relating to tributary–scale oyster sanctuaries.

15 BY renumbering

16 Article – Natural Resources
17 Section 4–1014 through 4–1014.3, respectively
18 to be Section 4–1014.1 through 4–1014.4, respectively
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2018 Replacement Volume)

21 BY adding to

22 Article – Natural Resources
23 Section 4–1014
24 Annotated Code of Maryland
25 (2018 Replacement Volume)

26 Preamble

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, Under the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, Maryland and
2 the other Chesapeake Bay Program partners have committed to restoring native oyster
3 habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensuring their protection; and

4 WHEREAS, Significant public money from both State and federal sources has
5 already been spent in these tributaries for the explicit purpose of ecological restoration; and

6 WHEREAS, Early monitoring results from the Harris Creek oyster sanctuary
7 indicate that restored reefs there are thriving and removing approximately 100,000 pounds
8 of nitrogen pollution from State waters annually; now, therefore,

9 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
10 That Section(s) 4–1014 through 4–1014.3, respectively, of Article – Natural Resources of
11 the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 4–1014.1 through
12 4–1014.4, respectively.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read
14 as follows:

15 **Article – Natural Resources**

16 **4–1014.**

17 **(A) THERE IS ESTABLISHED A NETWORK OF OYSTER SANCTUARIES IN THE**
18 **FIVE TRIBUTARIES IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR LARGE-SCALE**
19 **RESTORATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE 2014 CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED**
20 **AGREEMENT.**

21 **(B) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION:**

22 **(1) THERE IS AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN HARRIS CREEK THAT**
23 **INCLUDES ALL OF THE WATERS OF HARRIS CREEK ENCLOSED BY A LINE BEGINNING**
24 **AT A POINT ON THE EAST SHORE OF TILGHMAN ISLAND DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38**
25 **DEGREES 42.241 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 19.997 MINUTES WEST;**
26 **THEN RUNNING NORTHERLY TO A POINT ON THE SOUTH SHORE OF KNAPPS**
27 **NARROWS, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 42.925 MINUTES NORTH,**
28 **LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 19.709 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 49 DEGREES TRUE**
29 **TO A POINT ON THE NORTH SHORE OF KNAPPS NARROWS, DEFINED BY LATITUDE**
30 **38 DEGREES 43.035 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 19.547 MINUTES**
31 **WEST; THEN RUNNING NORTHERLY ALONG THE WEST SHORE OF HARRIS CREEK TO**
32 **ITS HEADWATERS AND THEN SOUTHERLY ALONG THE EAST SHORE OF HARRIS**
33 **CREEK TO A POINT ON THE SHORE OF CHANGE POINT DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38**
34 **DEGREES 43.008 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 17.656 MINUTES WEST;**
35 **THEN RUNNING 247 DEGREES TRUE TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;**

1 **(2) THERE IS AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN THE LITTLE CHOPTANK**
2 **RIVER THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE WATERS OF THE LITTLE CHOPTANK RIVER**
3 **UPSTREAM OF A LINE BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SHORE OF SUSQUEHANNA**
4 **POINT DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 30.642 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76**
5 **DEGREES 15.492 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 329 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT ON**
6 **SHORE AT THE SOUTH END OF RAGGED POINT ISLAND, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38**
7 **DEGREES 31.886 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 16.440 MINUTES WEST;**

8 **(3) THERE IS AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN THE TRED AVON RIVER**
9 **THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE WATERS OF THE TRED AVON RIVER NORTH AND EAST**
10 **OF A LINE BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SHORE ON THE EAST SIDE OF TOWN**
11 **CREEK, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 41.835 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE**
12 **76 DEGREES 9.923 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 255 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT**
13 **DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 41.823 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76**
14 **DEGREES 9.981 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 0 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT ON**
15 **THE SHORE OF THE EAST SIDE OF PLAINDEALING CREEK, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38**
16 **DEGREES 42.576 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 9.978 MINUTES WEST;**

17 **(4) THERE IS AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN THE ST. MARY'S RIVER THAT**
18 **INCLUDES ALL OF THE WATERS OF THE ST. MARY'S RIVER BEGINNING AT A POINT**
19 **ON THE SHORE SOUTHWEST OF DEEP POINT DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES**
20 **11.279 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES 26.639 MINUTES WEST; THEN**
21 **RUNNING 89 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT ON THE SHORE AT CHURCH POINT DEFINED**
22 **BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 11.286 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 76 DEGREES**
23 **26.263 MINUTES WEST; AND**

24 **(5) THERE IS AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN THE MANOKIN RIVER THAT**
25 **INCLUDES ALL OF THE WATERS OF THE MANOKIN RIVER UPSTREAM OF A LINE**
26 **BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SHORE OF HAZARD POINT DEFINED BY LATITUDE**
27 **38 DEGREES 4.571 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 75 DEGREES 52.694 MINUTES**
28 **WEST; THEN RUNNING 306 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT ON THE SHORE AT PIN POINT**
29 **ON LITTLE DEAL ISLAND, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 6.750 MINUTES**
30 **NORTH, LONGITUDE 75 DEGREES 56.552 MINUTES WEST; AND EAST OF A LINE**
31 **BEGINNING AT A POINT ON THE SHORE AT THE NORTH END OF LITTLE DEAL ISLAND,**
32 **DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 7.695 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 75**
33 **DEGREES 56.816 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 209 DEGREES TRUE TO A POINT ON**
34 **THE SHORE ON THE WEST SIDE OF LOWER THOROFARE, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38**
35 **DEGREES 7.652 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 75 DEGREES 56.847 MINUTES WEST;**
36 **AND SOUTHEAST OF A LINE BEGINNING ON THE SHORE ON THE EAST SIDE OF LAWS**
37 **THOROFARE, DEFINED BY LATITUDE 38 DEGREES 8.904 MINUTES NORTH,**
38 **LONGITUDE 75 DEGREES 55.964 MINUTES WEST; THEN RUNNING 251 DEGREES**
39 **TRUE TO A POINT ON THE WEST SIDE OF LAWS THOROFARE, DEFINED BY LATITUDE**

1 **38 DEGREES 8.873 MINUTES NORTH, LONGITUDE 75 DEGREES 56.077 MINUTES**
2 **WEST.**

3 **(C) (1) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO A PERSON WHO ENGAGES**
4 **IN AQUACULTURE ACTIVITIES WITHIN AN OYSTER SANCTUARY IN ACCORDANCE**
5 **WITH A VALID LEASE ISSUED UNDER SUBTITLE 11A OF THIS TITLE.**

6 **(2) A PERSON MAY NOT CATCH OYSTERS IN OR REMOVE OYSTER SEED**
7 **FROM AN OYSTER SANCTUARY:**

8 **(I) DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; OR**

9 **(II) ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT IN REGULATION.**

10 **(D) (1) THE DEPARTMENT, IN COORDINATION WITH THE OYSTER**
11 **ADVISORY COMMISSION, THE OYSTER INTERAGENCY WORKGROUP, AND**
12 **INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS, SHALL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT RESTORATION**
13 **PLANS FOR EACH OF THE OYSTER SANCTUARIES DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (B) OF**
14 **THIS SECTION.**

15 **(2) EACH RESTORATION PLAN SHALL:**

16 **(I) ESTABLISH ACREAGE TARGETS THAT EXCEED 50% OF THE**
17 **CURRENTLY RESTORABLE OYSTER HABITAT IN THE SANCTUARY, AS DEFINED BY**
18 **THE OYSTER INTERAGENCY WORKGROUP;**

19 **(II) FOR REEF CONSTRUCTION, REQUIRE THE USE OF**
20 **SUBSTRATE THAT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED IN PREVIOUS TRIBUTARY-SCALE**
21 **OYSTER RESTORATION PROJECTS TO MAXIMIZE OYSTER DENSITY;**

22 **(III) ESTABLISH A PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE THAT**
23 **DEMONSTRATES HOW RESTORATION TARGETS WILL BE ACHIEVED BY 2025, IN**
24 **ACCORDANCE WITH THE 2014 CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT; AND**

25 **(IV) INCLUDE PLANS FOR CONTINUED MONITORING OF THE**
26 **SANCTUARY AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT IF**
27 **FUTURE MONITORING INDICATES THAT A SANCTUARY IS NO LONGER MEETING THE**
28 **FOLLOWING MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:**

29 **1. ON RESTORED REEFS:**

30 **A. A MINIMUM DENSITY OF 15 OYSTERS PER SQUARE**
31 **METER;**

1 **B. A MINIMUM BIOMASS OF 15 GRAMS DRY WEIGHT PER**
2 **SQUARE METER;**

3 **C. A MINIMUM OF AT LEAST 2-YEAR CLASSES OF**
4 **OYSTERS; AND**

5 **D. SUBSTRATE OR OYSTERS PRESENT ON AT LEAST 30%**
6 **OF THE REEF AREA; AND**

7 **2. WITHIN THE WHOLE SANCTUARY, A MINIMUM OF 50%**
8 **OF REEF HABITAT, CONSTITUTING AT LEAST 8% OF HISTORIC OYSTER HABITAT,**
9 **MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS OF ITEM 1 OF THIS ITEM.**

10 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

11 (a) On or before December 1, 2019, the Department of Natural Resources shall
12 report to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the
13 House Environment and Transportation Committee, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the
14 State Government Article, on the development and implementation of restoration plans for
15 the five oyster sanctuaries described in Section 2 of this Act.

16 (b) On or before July 1, 2020, the Department of Natural Resources, in
17 consultation with the Oyster Advisory Commission, the Oyster Interagency Workgroup,
18 and interested stakeholders, shall finalize restoration plans for the St. Mary's River and
19 Manokin River oyster sanctuaries, in accordance with Section 2 of this Act.

20 (c) On or before December 1, 2021, the Department of Natural Resources shall
21 fully implement existing restoration plans for the Tred Avon River and the Little Choptank
22 River oyster sanctuaries.

23 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July
24 1, 2019.