

# HOUSE BILL 784

M2

6lr2750

---

By: **Delegate D. Jones**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 2026

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

---

Committee Report: Favorable

House action: Adopted

Read second time: February 26, 2026

---

## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Aquaculture – Placement of Shellfish, Bags, Nets, and Structures on Submerged**  
3 **Aquatic Vegetation – Extension**

4 FOR the purpose of extending the authorization of a leaseholder of certain aquaculture  
5 leases, with prior written approval from the Department of Natural Resources, to  
6 place shellfish, bags, nets, and structures on submerged aquatic vegetation, subject  
7 to certain requirements; and generally relating to aquaculture leases and submerged  
8 aquatic vegetation.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
10 Article – Natural Resources  
11 Section 4–11A–10(c) and (c–1)  
12 Annotated Code of Maryland  
13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
15 Chapter 238 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2019, as amended by Chapter  
16 113 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2024  
17 Section 3

18 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
19 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

20 **Article – Natural Resources**

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 4-11A-10.

2 (c) A leaseholder may not:

3 (1) Place shellfish, bags, nets, or structures on submerged aquatic  
4 vegetation without prior written approval from the Department;

5 (2) Plant or harvest shellfish within 500 yards of any stationary blind or  
6 blind site that is occupied and being used for hunting migratory waterfowl;

7 (3) Sublease a lease;

8 (4) Transfer a lease without the approval of the Department;

9 (5) Harvest shellfish outside the hours established by the Department in  
10 regulation; or

11 (6) Place unlawfully harvested oysters on a lease.

12 (c-1) In approving the placement of shellfish, bags, nets, or structures on  
13 submerged aquatic vegetation under subsection (c)(1) of this section, the Department:

14 (1) May not authorize harvesting by dredge in areas where submerged  
15 aquatic vegetation is present;

16 (2) Shall authorize for water column leases the placement of shellfish,  
17 bags, nets, or structures in at least 10% of the area where submerged aquatic vegetation is  
18 present; and

19 (3) Shall authorize harvest by diving in areas on any submerged land lease  
20 where submerged aquatic vegetation is present.

21 **Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2019, as amended by Chapter 113 of the Acts of 2024**

22 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
23 1, 2019. It shall remain effective for a period of [8] 11 years and 1 month and, at the end  
24 of June 30, [2027] 2030, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly,  
25 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

26 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June  
27 1, 2026.