

## **POSSIBLE CHANGES TO REGULATIONS FOR SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE**

The department would like to add a penalty to the shellfish aquaculture regulations for violating shellfish import rules.

A person is required by regulation (COMAR 08.02.08.01) to obtain a permit prior to importing or possessing shellfish that were taken from waters outside of Maryland that will be planted in Maryland waters. This regulation exists to protect existing Maryland shellfish resources, both wild and those on shellfish aquaculture leases. Importing and planting shellfish from out-of-state without a permit could introduce disease causing organisms into susceptible areas, endangering these resources and creating economic loss. The department would like to add a violation of the shellfish import rules to the list of violations that could result in the suspension or revocation of an individual's shellfish aquaculture harvester permit or registration card. The addition will help to reduce risk associated with illegal imports.