The State of Maryland

Executive Department

EXECUTIVE ORDER
01.01.2023.12

Maryland's Oyster Shell and Substrate Taskforce

WHEREAS, Increasing the abundance of the Eastern Oyster, a critical species for Maryland's economy and water quality, is a priority of the Moore-Miller Administration;

WHEREAS, Oysters play a valuable role in creating reefs that clean water and provide habitat for critical species, including crabs and striped bass;

WHEREAS, Oysters arc a defining species and their reefs a defining feature of the character and culture of the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, The State of Maryland is currently limited in its ability to process oyster shells for use in promoting oyster reproduction and must ship oyster shells out of state for processing, thus losing a valuable resource for the State and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WES MOORE, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, BY THE VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME BY THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF MARYLAND, HEREBY PROCLAIM THE FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE ORDER, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:

A. Establishment. There is a Maryland's Oyster Shell and Substrate Taskforce ("Taskforce"), housed in the Department of Natural Resources.

8. Membership. The Taskforce shall be comprised of members, appointed by the Governor, representing the following sectors:

(l) The Secretary of Natural Resources or their designee;

(2) The Secretary of Commerce or their designee;

(3) A local government official;

(4) The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science;

(5) A commercial waterman;

(6) A recreational fisherman;

(7) An economist from one of the State's Historically Black Colleges and Universities;

(8) The Oyster Recovery Partnership;

(9) A seafood company owner;

(I 0) A private oyster hatchery owner;

(11) The State's aquaculture industry; and

(12) The State's conservation community.

C. Chair. The Governor shall appoint a Chair from among the members of the Taskforce. The Chair shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

D. Functions. The principal functions of the Taskforce are to:

(I) Identify strategies and solutions to retain shell, increase abundance and create an overall additive situation for oyster substrate across the Chesapeake Bay;

(2) Evaluate strategies based on the ability to meet the demand from the public fishery, aquaculture industry and restoration component in the near term and focusing on meeting needs for the growth of all three components; and

(3) Evaluate the economic impacts substrate has on the State and develop recommendations that take into consideration costs and benefits for the fishery.

E. Procedures.

(I) The Taskforce shall meet monthly.

(2) The Taskforce Chair may convene meetings of the Taskforce and shall preside over the meetings.

(3) A majority of the Taskforce members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of any business.

(4) The Taskforce may adopt other procedures as necessary to ensure the orderly transaction of business.

(5) The Task force shall be staffed by the Department of Natural Resources.

F. Reports.

(I) The Taskforce shall submit a report to the Governor containing recommendations for achieving a positive oyster shell and substrate environment by December 1, 2024.

(2) The Taskforce shall hire a consultant to facilitate the reporting to the Governor, in a manner consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

G. This Executive Order shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with all applicable statutes and regulations. Nothing in this Executive Order shall operate to contravene any State or federal law or to affect the State's receipt or federal funding.

H. If any provision or this Executive Order or its application to any person, entity, or circumstance is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, all other provisions or applications of the Executive Order shall remain in effect to the extent possible without the invalid provision or application. To achieve this purpose, the provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

GIVEN Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland, in the City of Cambridge, Dorchester County, this 20th Day of July, 2023.

Wes Moore
Governor

ATTEST:

Susan C. Lee
Secretary of State