November 15, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland
21401-1925

Via Email

Dear Governor Moore:

On behalf of Maryland's Oyster Shell and Substrate Task Force which you established under Maryland Executive Order 01.01.2023.12, I am pleased to submit this final report of findings and recommendations.

For the past twelve months, this 12-member Taskforce convened on 18 occasions with a goal of identifying solutions to the shortage of oyster substrate in the Chesapeake Bay. Drawing upon the expertise of the Taskforce members and subject matter experts from Maryland and beyond, we explored the causes of the decline in the amount of oyster substrate and worked to identify potential actions to retain and enhance the supply of existing shell and substrate to meet the increasing demands of the future.

Tackling these challenges requires a multifaceted approach; more than 30 recommendations are presented by the Taskforce which will require commitment, and in some cases funding, to implement. The timeframe of implementation varies, from immediate (one month) to a decade or more. However, taken together, we believe that these recommendations will put Maryland on course to substantially increase oyster substrate to meet the growing needs of the public fishery, aquaculture industry, and restoration sanctuary programs.

Finally, I would like to thank you for assembling such a distinguished group of individuals to serve on this Taskforce. It was a tremendous honor and privilege to be entrusted to serve as the Taskforce chair. We stand ready to help you in any way that we can to implement the recommendations made herein.

Sincerely,

Scott Knoche, PhD
Chair
Maryland's Oyster Shell and Substrate Task Force