



**CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION**  
*Saving a National Treasure*

**Talking Points  
House Bill 1488**

January 2018

## **Oppose House Bill 1488 (Helsel)**

This proposed legislation seeks to remove a longstanding provision in state code that prohibits the possession of an oyster dredge onboard a vessel when it is crossing an oyster sanctuary.

This prohibition has been in code since the 1950s and for good reason: oyster dredges are the most efficient harvesting tool and can easily be employed to take significant numbers of oysters in a very short time. This is considered one of the Commonwealth's most serious natural resources violations.

This prohibition on dredging equipment in sanctuary areas has helped the oyster population make a remarkable recovery in recent years. This provision protects our sanctuary reefs and the oyster industry by ensuring vitally important broodstock remain in sanctuaries to increase reproduction throughout the state's waterways and allows the continued successful restoration of these critical filter feeders. Successful restoration efforts enable our oyster fishery to flourish, positively impacting the state's economy.

Passing House Bill 1488 could further reduce the oyster population, hurting the livelihood of law-abiding watermen when the industry is just starting to recover.

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