

R035-0708

10 **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE HEALTH, PROTECTION, AND**
20 **RECUPERATION OF OUR CHESAPEAKE BAY**

30 **WHEREAS:** The Chesapeake Bay is teetering on the brink of ecological disaster thanks to the
40 politics of postponement practiced by the Maryland State Government, which
50 has left several vital species on the brink of extinction; and,

60 **WHEREAS:** The Blue Crab is the Maryland State Crustacean and is vital to the culture of the
70 State of Maryland as well as the health of the Chesapeake Bay; and,

80 **WHEREAS:** The numbers of Blue Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay have been declining rapidly;
90 and,

100 **WHEREAS:** Commercial crabbing is not a vital industry in Maryland, as most Blue Crabs
110 sold and served in the State come from other states, and other crabs come from
120 foreign nations; and,

130 **WHEREAS:** Commercial crabbing in the Bay unnecessarily depletes the already exhausted
140 Blue Crab population of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; and,

150 **WHEREAS:** Oysters are vital to the health of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, as they help to
160 filter water, removing pollution from it; and,

170 **WHEREAS:** Oysters populations in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have been declining at an
180 alarming rate, and may soon be beyond the point of ever recovering; and,

190 **WHEREAS:** Without oysters, there is no hope of ever returning the Chesapeake Bay to a
200 healthy state; and,

210 **WHEREAS:** Attempts at introducing alien species of oysters into the Chesapeake Bay have
220 brought diseases that the native animals have no immunity to, and further
230 attempts will put even more native species at risk; and,

240 **WHEREAS:** Menhaden are a vital cog in the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem, as they are eaten
250 by many types of larger fish; and,

260 **WHEREAS:** Menhaden help to eat the massive algae blooms that blight the Chesapeake Bay
270 every summer; and,

280 **WHEREAS:** These algae blooms hamper oyster breeding as well as contributing to low water
290 clarity and oxygen-less "dead-zones" in the Chesapeake Bay; and,

300 **WHEREAS:** Menhaden are not fished for human consumption, but rather to be pressed for
310 their oil and for use in poultry feed; and,

320 **WHEREAS:** The amount of sea grass in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed has become lower
330 than is healthy; and,

340 **WHEREAS:** Sea grass is a vital part of the Chesapeake Bay, providing the habitat for
350 numerous species of fish and to Blue Crabs, as well as providing vital dissolved
360 oxygen to the water; and,

370 **WHEREAS:** Areas of the Chesapeake Bay that lack dissolved oxygen become "dead-zones",
380 areas devoid of oxygen and which can not support life; and,

390 **WHEREAS:** These “dead-zones” kill hundreds of fish in the bay annually, dead fish which
400 create unappealing and unsanitary conditions on Maryland’s beaches; and,

410 **WHEREAS:** Tourism is a much more vital industry to the economy of Maryland than
420 crabbing, oystering, or fishing; and,

430 **WHEREAS:** The tourism industry that is built around the Chesapeake Bay will be devastated
440 without the protection and recuperation of these species; and,

450 **WHEREAS:** The reputation and prestige of the great State of Maryland is directly linked to
460 the health and status of the Chesapeake Bay.

470 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature encourages
480 the Maryland State Government to immediately enact a moratorium on the
490 practice of commercial crabbing in the State of Maryland.

500 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland State Government should also immediately
510 enact a moratorium on the practice of commercial oyster harvesting in the State
520 of Maryland.

530 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland General Assembly should enact a system of
540 government subsidies to private individuals, businesses, non-profit groups, and
550 communities for the purposes of establishing and maintaining native oyster
560 colonies in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

570 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland State Government should enact a
580 moratorium on the practice of menhaden fishing in the Chesapeake Bay
590 Watershed, and the Maryland General Assembly should pass legislation banning
600 the use of poultry feed containing menhaden.

610 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the Maryland General Assembly should enact a system of
620 government subsidies to private individuals, businesses, non-profit groups, and
630 communities for the purposes of establishing and maintaining native sea grass
640 colonies in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

650 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That each moratorium be maintained until the population of
660 that species is healthy enough, to be able to sustain an industry, at which point
670 the Maryland General Assembly should replace the moratorium with a system of
680 very strict quotas, designed to ensure the health and continued growth of the
690 population of that species.

700 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:** That the United States Federal Government should appropriate
710 funds to support these subsidy programs, as well as appropriate more funds to
720 help with general cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

730 **MANDATES:** Governor Martin O’Malley
740 State Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, President of the Maryland Senate
750 State Delegate Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
760 State Senator Edward J. Kasemeyer, Senate Majority Leader
770 State Delegate Kumar P. Barve, House Majority Leader
780 Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
790 Representative Steny H. Hoyer, House Majority Leader
800 Senator Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
810 Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

820

Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

SPONSOR:

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