

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 no longer a vital industry in Maryland, as most Blue
110 Crabs sold and served in the State come from other states, and other crabs come
120 foreign nations; and,

130 **WHEREAS:** Unrestricted commercial crabbing in the Bay overly depletes the already
140 exhausted 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 implace a system of strict caps and limits on
490 commercial crab catches in the State of Maryland designed to ensure the health
500 and growth of the population of crabs in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

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

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

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

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

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

690 **MANDATES:** Governor Martin O’Malley
700 State Senator Thomas V. Mike Miller, President of the Maryland Senate
710 State Delegate Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates
720 State Senator Edward J. Kasemeyer, Senate Majority Leader
730 State Delegate Kumar P. Barve, House Majority Leader
740 Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
750 Representative Steny H. Hoyer, House Majority Leader
760 Senator Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
770 Senator Barbara A. Mikulski
780 Stephen L. Johnson, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection
 Agency

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