

In view of the passage and approval of House Bill No. 518 this bill has been vetoed.

SENATE BILL 172

AN ACT to repeal and re-enact, with amendments, Sub-sections 9 (a), 11 (d) and 11 (g) of Article 72 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1939 Edition and 1943 Supplement), title "Oysters and Clams", as said Article was amended by Chapter 929 of the Acts of 1945; to add a new sub-section to be known as Sub-section 13 (d), said sub-section to follow immediately after Sub-section 13 (c) of said Article, requiring oyster packers to sell 65% of their oyster shells to the Department of Tidewater Fisheries in addition to the 10% already provided for, requiring the Department of Tidewater Fisheries to plant such shells, authorizing the Department of Tidewater Fisheries to utilize an area north of a line between Sandy Point and Love Point for the propagation of seed oysters, levying a tax of 5¢ a gallon on all shucked oysters, and providing that said tax be paid by the packer or other processor to the Department of Tidewater Fisheries prior to shipment; and repealing Sub-section 11 (c) of said Article, relating to the authority to close county dredging and tonging bars.

In its original form as introduced the provisions of this bill related to the location of the boundaries of the mouth of the Patuxent River. It was amended to its present text and passed in the last part of the session of the General Assembly.

Members of the Tidewater Fisheries Commission consider that the bill contains some meritorious provisions, but the Commission has not designated its official position on the bill.

Obtaining shells for replanting is essential in the propagation of oysters. In addition to the rights of purchase now held by the State, this bill gives to the State an option only to purchase not less than 65% of the shells from the oysters shucked in any establishment at a fixed price, without committing the State to the purchase of those shells.

An additional tax of 5¢ per gallon is levied upon all oysters produced, no matter where the oysters come from. Those engaged in the oyster industry vigorously oppose the bill on the ground that the bill was hastily drawn and passed without any opportunity accorded them for study and consideration, or the presentation of their views upon the subject. They further claim that the provisions of the bill will have a disastrous effect in competition with packers in Virginia and New Jersey.