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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 164

House Amendments in [] — January 25, 2002

[*Proclaiming support for the commercial production of genetically sterile Crassostrea ariakensis within guidelines and parameters established by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, pursuant to the Institute's November 28, 2001 Statement of the Commercial Aquaculture Use of Crassostrea ariakensis in the Chesapeake Bay, and support for continued restoration efforts of Virginia's native oyster. Proclaiming support for the continuation of efforts to establish commercial aquaculture production of genetically sterile Crassostrea ariakensis.]*

Patron Prior to Engrossment—Delegate Pollard

Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources

WHEREAS, in 1995 the General Assembly through House Joint Resolution No. 450 directed the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences to begin research on nonnative oyster species for possible use in the Chesapeake Bay; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, by following the international protocol for the introduction of nonnative species, has learned that Crassostrea ariakensis is a fast-growing, disease-resistant oyster with significant market potential; and

WHEREAS, diseases of MSX and dermo have devastated the landings of oysters in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, prior to the 1980's, annual oyster harvests averaged nearly one million bushels per year, and since 1990 the average annual oyster harvest has been less than 50,000 bushels and in steady decline as evidenced by a total harvest of only 2,000 bushels in 2001; and

WHEREAS, in 1985 the oyster industry's dockside value was \$7,141,000; and

WHEREAS, in 1994 the oyster industry's dockside value was only \$812,387; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's oyster industry is the only national oyster industry without a ready-stock of available oysters; and

WHEREAS, restoration efforts of Crassostrea virginica are showing promise, but it will likely be many years before a disease-resistant strain of Virginia's native oyster can be successfully grown for commercial markets; and

WHEREAS, the genetic breeding of triploids has proven to be a highly effective control against normal reproductive function when applied to oysters; and

WHEREAS, other protocols to prevent reproduction can further substantially lessen the degree of a nonintended introduction of breeding stock so that the risk of such introduction is extremely low; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's oyster industry will likely not survive without some Virginia-grown stock for market use; and

WHEREAS, any adult oyster, whether native or nonnative, filters more than fifty gallons of water per day and therefore is ecologically beneficial; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Seafood Council has specifically endorsed the responsible use of genetically sterile Crassostrea ariakensis with proper aquaculture protocol developed by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, on November 28, 2001, released a statement indicating that development of a protocol for the commercial aquaculture of triploid strains of Crassostrea ariakensis can be accomplished with proper partnering of scientific evaluation; now, therefore, be it

[**RESOLVED** by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly proclaim its support for the commercial production of genetically sterile Crassostrea ariakensis within guidelines and parameters established by the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences, pursuant to the Institute's November 28, 2001 Statement of the Commercial Aquaculture Use of Crassostrea ariakensis in the Chesapeake Bay, and support for continued restoration efforts of Virginia's native oyster; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly requests continued feedback from the various stakeholders in these endeavors so that any legislative action needed to encourage non-native aquaculture or native restoration may be identified.

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly proclaim its support of the continuation of efforts to establish commercial aquaculture production of genetically sterile Crassostrea ariakensis within the guidelines and parameters called for or established by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, the Virginia Marine Resources Commission, in consultation with policies adopted by the Chesapeake Executive Council and under the protocols of the International

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59 Council for the Exploration of the Seas; and, be it

60 RESOLVED FURTHER, That the General Assembly renew Virginia's commitment to increase the
61 native oyster by ten-fold by 2010 as outlined in the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement and encourage the
62 continued and expanded federal-state cooperative efforts and the efforts of private organizations in this
63 endeavor.]