

1995 SESSION

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 450

Requesting the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to develop a strategic plan for molluscan shellfish research and begin the process of seeking necessary approvals for in-water testing of nonnative oyster species.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 4, 1995

Agreed to by the Senate, February 21, 1995

WHEREAS, the management and productivity of shellfish populations in Virginia's waters depend on a vigorous program of scientific investigation and research; and

WHEREAS, a range of important issues facing the native oyster supply demands further research including studies on oyster diseases, immunity, genetics and breeding; and

WHEREAS, further research is necessary to determine the potential for cultivating species not currently being cultured in Virginia waters; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of the Commonwealth to determine whether species not native to Virginia waters could play a role in the shellfish industry; and

WHEREAS, all shellfish research conducted by the agencies of the Commonwealth should be done in a coordinated and strategic fashion; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia Institute of Marine Science be requested to undertake the development of a strategic ten-year plan for molluscan shellfish research and to begin the process of seeking approvals in conformance with state, federal and international laws and protocols for the in-water testing of oyster species not native to Virginia waters. The plan shall take into account the views of members of the shellfish industry and the interested public, related Chesapeake Bay regional, national and international initiatives, and shall, at a minimum, include: (i) an assessment of recent research on shellfish stocks, diseases, habitat and other facets germane to shellfish culture; (ii) research on oyster diseases, including studies of immunity, genetics and selective breeding for disease resistance; (iii) research necessary to identify suitable species for aquaculture and the development of methods for culture of those species; (iv) studies of the economic viability of candidate aquaculture species; (v) research on nonnative species with respect to disease resistance and survivability in local waters; and (vi) an assessment of available funding vehicles and unmet needs to conduct the activities called for in the plan.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall assist in the conduct of this study as requested by the Director of the Institute.

The Institute shall complete its work in time to submit its findings, including a report on the progress in seeking approvals for in-water testing of nonnative oyster species, to the Governor and the 1996 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.