



Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association

8461C Fort Smallwood Road • Pasadena, MD 21122
Phone: 410-255-5535 • Fax: 410-255-1552
Email: fishmssa@aol.com • Website: www.mssa.net

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MSSA Takes the Heat for Protecting the Bay

Pasadena, MD - The Maryland Saltwater Sportfishermen's Association (MSSA) and its Executive Director, Rich Novotny, were personally attacked yesterday during a Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee hearing for opposing legislation that would compensate commercial clambers from 1994 to October of 2008 for dredging in the Back Bays of Ocean City.

50 watermen descended upon Annapolis demanding the state give them money for a historically destructive industry at the same time asking to extend their permits for another 3-5 years. Further more they wanted to be compensated for the next five years for their potential loss of income. While there is no responsible way to estimate the amount of potential earnings from clamming, DNR suggests it would be several hundreds of thousands of dollars just to buy their equipment not mentioning potential earnings.

Unfortunately the testimony became personal when the watermen had no scientific or factual evidence to support their claim that dredging actually improves the health and vitality of the Bay.

While the MSSA, by resolution from the board, agreed to language which will compensate the watermen for their equipment and forfeit thereof, they did not agree to an extension of dredging. Rich Novotny said this was absolutely out of the question and provided aerial photos of the destructive process dredging has on the Back Bays.

For the many years the MSSA has taken an active role in protecting Maryland's most valuable asset and continues to fight for the conservation of our marine resources for future generations.