

WHEREAS, In September 1980, the National Aquaculture Act was signed, stating that the national policy is "to encourage the development of aquaculture in the United States"; and

WHEREAS, Marylanders, alone, consume in excess of 63 million pounds of seafood products annually, an increase of 40% in the past two decades; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is ideally situated, both geographically and environmentally, for development of a viable aquaculture industry; and

WHEREAS, Despite having the resources to become a seafood exporter, Maryland is currently a net importer of fish and seafood; and

WHEREAS, Maryland has been steadily losing its competitive edge in the seafood industry against other states such as New York, Virginia, Louisiana, and Texas; and

WHEREAS, Aquaculture represents a new and thriving economic opportunity for Maryland agricultural and seafood industry; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Agriculture

2-106.

(a) The following positions and units are included within the Department:

- (1) The Tobacco Authority of the State of Maryland;
- (2) The Maryland Agricultural Fair Board;
- (3) The Maryland State Apple Commission;
- (4) The Chief of Weights and Measures;
- (5) The State Chemist;
- (6) The State Veterinarian;
- (7) The State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners;
- (8) The Wholesome Meat Advisory Council of Maryland;
- (9) The State Soil Conservation Committee;