



## Sign A Pledge To Put A Maryland Oyster Dish On Your Menu

WHY? By putting oysters from the Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay on your menu, you are not only enjoying a great, healthy, locally-grown seafood product, but you are actually helping to save the bay! This is not a cliché, it is the truth. Maryland grows lots of oysters. Each adult filters over 30 gallons of water per day and these shellfish are a “keystone species” in the revival of the ecology and the economy of the Chesapeake Bay.

In 2009, Maryland set the stage for expanding oyster production by making it easier to “lease” areas of the bay bottom to grow oysters. In response to this effort, oyster aquaculture in Maryland is rapidly growing! Oyster farmers are working on the water planting, raising and harvesting millions of these succulent bivalves and farm-raised oysters are available year-round. By supporting these entrepreneurs, you are helping oyster farmers create a positive impact on our rural economies and the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

### MORE OYSTERS = ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

- 1.) Oysters help to improve water quality
- 2.) Clearer water promotes the growth of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)
- 3.) Oysters and SAV provide habitat and cover for juvenile fish and crabs
- 4.) Oyster reefs are vibrant living communities that support a wide range of species both above and below the water

100 years ago, shellfish filtered the entire volume of water in the bay several times per day. Now, with oysters at less than 1% of their historical population, it happens only every few months. In 1870, the oyster industry employed 30,000 people around the bay and produced revenue exceeding \$50 million yearly. With your support and commitment to putting Maryland oysters on your menu, we will be one step closer to restoring this industry and saving the bay!



I pledge to keep at least one Maryland oyster (aquaculture or wild) on the menu at my restaurant at all times. This can be verified at any time by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources via a visit or the submission of a recent invoice showing the purchase of the product. Please sign and fax to (410)260-8279 or email to [marylandseafood.dnr@maryland.gov](mailto:marylandseafood.dnr@maryland.gov)

Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_ Business : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_