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## Sustainable aquaculture, or not?

By Diane Maddex | Oct 10, 2014

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Residents along Little Assawoman Bay and Beach Cove turned out some 200 strong Monday night to pose questions to DNREC and other state officials and to voice their strong concerns about the oyster farming program set to begin shortly in the Inland Bays.

I represent residents who will be impacted by industrial-level fishing close to their homes and whose use of our pier and the bay itself will be severely limited. Several weeks ago we and our neighbors detailed these and other problems - navigation hazards, sights, sounds, smells, shellfish viability, sustainability, questionable economic benefits, and related issues - to DNREC Secretary David Small. We have provided numerous recommendations to mitigate the program's effects and hope to work with all the parties involved to find common ground.

But most important, I want to speak out on behalf of all people who use and love these bays.

In 1872, the United States became the first nation to set aside national parks for public enjoyment. Last year, the First State became the last state to be included in the National Park System, although it still has no national park.

But Delaware does have state parks, including two here that encompass the Inland Bays. Little Assawoman Bay is the western edge of Fenwick Island State Park, and Indian River and Rehoboth bays are part of Delaware Seashore State Park, the state's most popular park. Just as the beaches in these parks have been set aside for everyone's enjoyment, so should the bays across Route 1. These tranquil bays also deserve our protection, so that they can be treasured by all Americans - like a national park or the state parks that they already are.

In the country's early days our waterfronts were filled with messy, dirty, loud industrial uses. Only late in the last century did people realize how they were wasting a precious public resource and begin turning their rivers and bays from inappropriate private uses to public uses - for all to enjoy. We can learn from this past and not go down that road again.

Just recently the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a decision by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior not to allow oyster farming in an estuary of California's Point Reyes National Seashore - because it interfered with the park's purpose as a serene wilderness reserve. That secretary has

reached out to protect a precious waterway. Now we ask our own secretary of DNREC, and our legislators and other state officials, to do the same. We ask them to preserve our bays so that all Delawareans and all visitors can enjoy them undisturbed long into the future.

These bays are a national treasure that deserve our protection. We need to save them, but let's not destroy our bays in order to save them.

**Diane Maddex**  
**president**  
**Water's Edge Condominium Association Fenwick Island**



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are you aware that oysters actually clean the water and people real humans make a living farming them-you live by the water deal with fishing and oyster harvesting

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