



Riverkeeper's 2021 Legislative Memorandum

Support - S4741/A258 (Kaminsky/Rosenthal L.) - Support

Establishes an oyster shell recycling tax credit and directs DEC to promulgate necessary regulations.

Oyster restoration is an essential component in Riverkeeper's ongoing work to restore the Hudson River estuary. Oysters are an invaluable species to New York's saltwater coastal ecosystems, filtering pollutants from the water, protecting shorelines from erosion and storm surge, and provide habitat for countless other species through their reefs.¹ Unfortunately, Oyster populations in New York's coastal harbors are only a fraction of historic populations.²

Over the past several years, Riverkeeper has been excited by the work of the Billion Oyster Project, a New York City-based nonprofit, to restore oyster reefs to New York Harbor Harbor. Using reclaimed shells, they carry out impressive reef restoration projects and public education initiatives. Many restaurants donate shells to this effort following food service use, but unfortunately procuring reclaimed shells at scale is still a challenge in our region.

This legislation would bolster the Billion Oyster Project's work and oyster restoration efforts statewide by incentivizing the donation of used shells to improve the quality of coastal harbors. With added benefit of diverting material from the landfill waste stream, this bill is low-cost and common sense. We urge the legislature to pass this legislation before the end of session.

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