

Hello, my name is W. Mark Swingle and I am a Conservation Consultant with the Virginia Aquarium Foundation. We oppose HB 1645. Virginia has a history of inadequate attention to litter issues and the "litter tax" is a prime example. The annual tax (\$20-\$30 depending on the business) is the lowest in the nation per capita for any state and there is ample evidence of substantial non-compliance from the affected business community. Proceeds from the tax support the Litter Control and Recycling Fund which provides grants to localities to address litter problems that impact our lands and waterways. We oppose HB 1645 which is an attempt to reduce the penalty from \$100 to \$10 for failure to pay the annual litter tax. The current penalty of \$100 is more than reasonable for any business, and of course no business need ever pay the penalty if they are compliant with the nationally low annual fees. The state's Virginia Marnie Debris Reduction Plan has clearly stated the need for adequate funding to reduce litter problems affecting our natural lands, waterways, and wildlife. Penalty fees are in place to encourage compliance and \$100 for a business is a perfectly reasonable and meaningful fine for failure to comply with rules regarding the litter tax. We oppose HB 1645.