

Joint Resolution 1

(Senate Joint Resolution 1)

A Senate Joint Resolution concerning

Patuxent River Watershed – Amendment of Patuxent River Policy Plan

FOR the purpose of approving a certain amendment to the Patuxent River Policy Plan; resolving that a copy of this resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to certain individuals; and generally relating to the amendment of the Patuxent River Policy Plan.

WHEREAS, Section 5–812 of the State Finance and Procurement Article establishes the Patuxent River Commission; and

WHEREAS, As referenced in § 5–801(c) of the State Finance and Procurement Article, the Commission, the local governments represented on the Commission, and the Maryland General Assembly approved the original Patuxent River Policy Plan in 1984 in order to serve as a policy guide for the Commission, State agencies, and local governments in carrying out programs in the Patuxent River watershed; and

WHEREAS, Sections 5–805 and 5–806 of the State Finance and Procurement Article provide that the Commission and the Maryland Department of Planning shall periodically review and evaluate pertinent information, trends, and issues regarding the Patuxent River watershed in light of the Plan and the Commission’s activities; and

WHEREAS, Sections 5–805 and 5–806 of the State Finance and Procurement Article also provide procedures for updating the Plan by amendment and require that both the Commission and at least 6 of the 8 local jurisdictions with voting representation on the Commission must approve any amendments to the Plan before submission of the amendments to the General Assembly for approval; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, the Commission, the local governments represented on the Commission, and the Maryland General Assembly approved certain amendments updating the Plan; and

WHEREAS, According to the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Service’s Chesapeake Bay Report Card, the ecosystem health of the Patuxent River is in poor condition; and

WHEREAS, In spite of the river’s water quality challenges, the Patuxent River remains an important piece of Maryland’s natural heritage, providing a variety of habitats from cold–water trout streams to tidal wetlands and supporting more than 100 species of fish and shellfish, including oysters, blue crabs, striped bass, catfish, chain pickerel, and bluefish; and

WHEREAS, The Patuxent River holds the promise for increased abundance and diversity of living resources, along with clean, swimmable waters, which would support increased tourism, recreation, fisheries, quality of life, and economic development in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The Plan's role is to guide local jurisdictions and the State in preserving and restoring the Patuxent River, raising awareness of Patuxent River ecology through advocacy, and creating excitement among the citizenry about the opportunities for interaction with the Patuxent River; and

WHEREAS, Approval of the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update, as an amendment to the Plan, will invigorate local and State river restoration efforts; and

WHEREAS, In May 2014, the Commission approved the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update as an amendment to the Plan; and

WHEREAS, The 8 local jurisdictions with voting representation on the Commission have approved the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update in accordance with § 5–805(c) of the State Finance and Procurement Article as an amendment to the Plan; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly agrees with and approves of the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update as an amendment to the Plan; and

WHEREAS, On approval by the General Assembly, the Plan, as amended by the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan Update, is to serve as a policy guide for the Commission, State agencies, and local governments in enhancing restoration and protection of the Patuxent River watershed; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That, effective immediately on approval of this Joint Resolution, the General Assembly hereby approves the 2015 Patuxent River Policy Plan update as an amendment to the Patuxent River Policy Plan; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of Legislative Services to the Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr., Governor of Maryland; the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; the Honorable Michael E. Busch, Speaker of the House of Delegates; David R. Craig, Secretary of Planning; and Michael Leszcz, Chair of the Patuxent River Commission.

Signed by the President and the Speaker, May 10, 2016.