



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chairman
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Maryland Senate
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 172 – Bay Restoration Fund – Authorized Uses

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

In 2004, legislation was signed into law creating the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF), a dedicated fund to upgrade Maryland's wastewater treatment plants with enhanced nutrient removal technology. The purpose of the upgrades was to improve water quality and, hopefully, improve the health of the bay. After years of decline due to over enrichment of nutrients, in the years after the fund was created the bay finally saw modest improvements.

However, in the most recent report on the health of the bay, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation wrote that a different culprit was now threatening the health of the bay – extreme weather that is flushing “enormous amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and debris...off our lands and into the Bay.”

Howard County is no stranger to extreme weather events. On July 30, 2016, Ellicott City, Maryland was hit by a storm that pounded the town with nearly six inches of rain over two hours. This rain resulted in a flash flood that took two lives and devastated the area. At the time, the storm was called a 1-in-1,000-year event but a mere 22 months later, it happened again, taking another life and causing widespread damage.

Our county is currently in the middle of implementing the Ellicott City Safe and Sound plan, a comprehensive flood mitigation plan that will reduce flood water on Main Street to less than one foot in the event of a 100-year storm event. This is an investment, not only in Howard County, but also in the rivers and streams that surround Ellicott City and eventually run into the Bay. By reducing flooding in Ellicott City, we are reducing potential debris in the Chesapeake Bay that can be harmful to the plant and wildlife that call the bay home.

As introduced, Senate Bill 172 would add climate resiliency and flood control to the list of criteria used to determine how to allocate funding from the BRF. Additionally, the proposed legislation adds “volume or quality control” to the types of stormwater control measures that local governments can receive BRF funds for. In short, this legislation would enable local governments to use BRF funds to complete projects that protect their cities and towns from flooding events and allows local jurisdictions to be a better partner in the fight to increase the Bay's health.

While Ellicott City has received the bulk of the media coverage over the last few years, many other parts of Maryland have experienced flooding, including Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Western Maryland, and Frederick. Senate Bill 172 would greatly increase the capacity of counties across the state to fund and implement much needed flood prevention and mitigation projects.

For these and many other reasons, I ask for your support and passage of Senate Bill 172.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive