



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 925

Workgroup on Public Water Access

Date: March 4, 2021

To: Senate Education, Health and
Environmental Affairs Committee

Position: **Support with amendment**

From: Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS SB 925 WITH AMENDMENT**. This legislation establishes a Workgroup on Public Water Access to help expand public water access throughout Maryland with a particular focus on making water ways more accessible to public transit ridership. An amendment would ensure environmental consideration during public water access expansions.

Expanding public water access through public transit improves equity and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Public water access is a priority for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). CBF strongly supports the expansion of public water access through public transit as a way to improve equity in water access and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions from personal vehicles.

CBF works to expand access to the water through environmental education programs and advocacy. Positive experiences on the Chesapeake Bay help reinforce the importance of preserving Maryland's national treasure. This bill may help increase environmental awareness regarding the Bay through expanding access to waterways, many of them tributaries to the Chesapeake.

Environmental integrity of marshes, wetlands, and shoreline areas should be considered as public water access is expanded

CBF hopes the Workgroup envisioned in this legislation considers preserving the environmental integrity of marshes, wetlands, and shoreline areas alongside studying ways to expand water access, the Workgroup. These areas are fragile habitats within the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

The following amendment would help ensure this consideration:

Page 5, Line 24-25:

The Workgroup shall: (3) study and recommend infrastructure upgrades that will increase the availability of public water access **while preserving the environmental integrity of access sites;**

Page 6, Line 16-17:

(2) The final report shall include: (ii) model plans that State and local governments may use to increase the availability of public water access **while preserving the environmental integrity of access sites;**

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 925 WITH AMENDMENT. For more information, contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney, at rclark@cbf.org or 443.995.8753.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403
Phone (410) 268-8816 • Fax (410) 280-3513