



University of Maryland
CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

House Bill 716: Patuxent River Commission – Membership

Environment and Transportation Committee:

Chair: Delegate Kumar Barve. Vice-Chair: Delegate Dana Stein

Testimony from:

Dave Nemazie: Chief of Staff, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support with an amendment to HB716.

The Patuxent River Commission was formed in the early 1980's dedicated to the stewardship of the Patuxent River and its watershed. It strives to lead and inspire actions to protect, enhance and restore river species as well as the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values in the watershed. The original act envisioned a Patuxent River ecosystem as vital and productive in 2050 as it was in the 1950s. The Commission includes representatives from watershed stakeholders, the seven counties in the watershed, and the city of Laurel.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science leads the way toward better management of Maryland's natural resources and the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. The UMCES Chesapeake Biological Laboratory is at the mouth of the Patuxent River on Solomons Island. It was established in 1925 and is the oldest state-supported marine laboratory in continuous operation on the East Coast.

UMCES scientists have not only been VERY active in understanding and restoring the Patuxent River but have also served on the Commission for decades, if not since its origin. These scientists have described the success of the Commission in relation to its multiple voices with varying views working together on difficult issues. The Patuxent RiverKeeper is an important stakeholder who voice for the natural, cultural, economic, and recreational values in the watershed should be heard and formally have a voting seat on the Commission as this bill would require.

With the long history, dedication, and scientific leadership to the Patuxent River and the entire Chesapeake Bay, we believe that UMCES should also have a formal voting seat on the Commission and therefore offer the following Amendment:

a (8) as ex officio members:

(vii) THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE OR A DESIGNEE

UMCES hopes the Committee gives this bill and the proposed amendment a favorable report.