



Kim Coble
Executive Director

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**SUPPORT: HB 607 - Water Pollution Control - Discharge Permits - Stormwater
Associated with Construction Activity**

Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports HB607 addressing stormwater pollution associated with construction activity, and we thank Delegate Love for her leadership on this issue.

Sediment pollution is both an ecological and an economic problem for Maryland waters. Sediment runoff contributes to Maryland's need to frequently bear the cost of dredging channels for recreational and commercial boating. Sediment pollution also causes significant ecological harm to our streams and rivers, clouding the water, which blocks sunlight and harms aquatic-dwelling plants and animals.

For decades Maryland has demonstrated leadership among our Chesapeake Bay watershed neighbor states and has been making progress in reducing the pollution running off into our streams and the Chesapeake Bay. In spite of these efforts, erosion due to construction activity has continued to be a known problem for water pollution.

In advance of the hearing for HB607, watershed and local organizational members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition shared recent photographs they had taken of sediment runoff from construction sites. These photographs showed both sediment laden stormwater running directly off of construction sites, as well as plumes of sediment appearing in the receiving water of streams downhill from those sites. The documented polluted runoff was coming off of sites with erosion control intact, but controls that were clearly failing to achieve best management practices. HB607 has been structured to address this, by giving inspectors authority to require large construction sites to adapt their stormwater erosion controls when they are clearly not working as intended.

In addition, HB607 would:

1. Require large sites (disturbing 10 acres or more) to acquire individual permits, rather than being allowed to operate under the stormwater construction general permit. Doing so will ensure a thorough and appropriate review of site-specific controls for stormwater and will help to protect sensitive areas during clearing and grading.
2. Clarify and provide appropriate authority to inspectors to protect downstream waterways from sediment control failures and resultant pollution.
3. Establish substantial penalties for construction activities occurring without a permit to provide adequate deterrents to permit avoidance. Penalties would more appropriately demonstrate the seriousness of the detriment unpermitted grading activities would have on our aquatic natural resources.

If enacted, this bill will help to ensure construction sites are properly maintained, can be held accountable to manage their site responsibly, and protect our most sensitive waterways from harm due to sediment pollution. For these reasons, MDLCV urges a favorable report on HB607.