

Testimony for a favorable report on SB0969 – Stream and Watershed Restoration ...
“The Whole Watershed Act”

This important legislation is exactly what is needed to begin to improve the water quality of impaired streams in Maryland. According to MDE analysis there are impaired streams in most counties in Maryland including in Charles County where I live.

The current approach to watershed restoration has not achieved the results most expected. It is time to try a new model for stream restoration that prioritizes our restoration efforts on truly impaired small streams with a focus on removing those streams from MDE’s impaired list. This approach was endorsed in the University of Maryland’s 2023 report “Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response” and is based on innovative new approaches to stream restoration by other states in the Chesapeake watershed.

SB0969/HB1165 will prioritize \$20M in State funds toward 5 whole watershed restoration projects for 5 years. Selected watersheds will represent different geographies and land use types with a priority for Environmental Justice communities and that will have the ability to demonstrate progress in a relatively short time frame. The legislation will establish a State Management Team to select projects, monitor progress and expedite the permitting process. An added benefit of the legislation is the development of a certification for stream restoration practitioners to assure projects are done correctly using Best Management Practices and ensuring quality.

I am asking you to provide a favorable report for SB0969. This important legislation will provide a valuable model for how watershed improvement done right can increase water quality for all Marylanders.

Respectfully,

Bill

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