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February 19, 2024

Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for SB837

Dear Senator Feldman:

As a part and now full-time resident of the Hazelhurst area of Deep Creek Lake in Swanton, Garrett County, Maryland, for the past 70 years and a member of the Board of Directors of the Property Owners' Association of Deep Creek Lake (POA), I write to express my strong support for SB837. This bill will help control near shore vegetation through cold/freezing induced dieback which is an economically and environmentally benign method to control submerged subaquatic vegetation (SAV) growth, including invasive species. SB837 is scheduled to be heard before the Education and Environment Committee in the Maryland General Assembly on February 20, 2024.

SB837 requires Brookfield Power Piney & Deep Creek Lake LLC (Brookfield) to lower the level of Deep Creek Lake for at least 30 days during the winter months for 3-5 years during which the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will conduct a study to determine if lower lake levels during the winter months will retard the growth of SAV. Historically, Brookfield and its predecessors lowered the lake level in the winter months and SAVs were not a problem for those using the lake. However, over the past two winters, Brookfield has kept the water levels very high, and we have experienced a tremendous growth of SAVS reaching up to 10-12 feet or more from the lake bottom and entangling swimmers as well as boat propellers and sailboat center or dagger boards. I would note that in my many years of living on the lake there is no record of the lake ever failing to be refilled by spring even when the levels were lowered below the current Lower Rule Band.

I am also concerned that if we continue to have the proliferation of SAVs we will experience a regeneration of invasive species which we have worked hard to control. As you may be aware, the POA has worked closely with and contributed financially to the DNR effort to eradicate and control the invasive species Hydrilla in the southern end of the lake.

Maryland has a rich history of investing in the protection and restoration of bodies of water, especially the Chesapeake Bay. I urge you and your colleagues to make a similar investment in Deep Creek Lake by supporting SB837.

Thank you for your consideration,

