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Date: March 23, 2024

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: David Copley, Resident/Owner living in Water Oak Cove Community, Pasadena

Re: SB353 - Testimony in favor of CAD Task Force

I am a long-term resident of Anne Arundel County who has supported environmental issues since the 1970s. As an Architect, I can speak to the efforts the state and local jurisdictions have made to protect the bay water quality. These requirements have impacted thousands of Anne Arundel County residents with greater costs and limitations applied to their properties within the “Critical Area” with even more restriction applied to waterfront lots which have included very stringent limitations on work within 100 feet of the water’s edge.

It is inconceivable to me that all these environmental improvement efforts can be negated by allowing the MPA to purposely disturb the bay bottom beyond the necessary channel dredging operations to maintain Baltimore as a premier port of call.

I can offer personal experience in dealing with lingering impacts of past shortsighted decisions. A project in western Maryland had to bear the cost of filling abandoned mines with grout to prevent the multi-million dollar construction project from experiencing excessive settlement. The cost for the remedial effort was over one million dollars. There is no doubt in my mind that the coal extracted was worth less than the rectifying efforts undertaken to address the long-term impacts. In the case of the CAD operation what can be done when the underwater disposal of the dredge material creates high levels of toxins?

As originally proposed by the MPA, the CAP dredging disposal operation was bad enough as it capped the material dredged from the areas near Bethlehem Steel site (which was where the mill historically dumped waste into the river without recognition or concern for long-term consequences). Now MPA has eliminated the sealing or “capping” of the dredged material from project scope as described in their own graphics and descriptions. This will result in the bottom being continuously disturbed by tidal flows, storms and boat/shipping traffic resulting in the deposited fines and any chemicals being redispersed in the active water layer.

Each bucket of material removed from the channel will result in at least 5 buckets of disturbance to the water quality. Two to remove the surface layer, two to dig a deeper hole, and finally one to deposit the highly suspect channel dredge material. Multiply this by the necessary buckets to arrive at a conclusion of the proposed extent of operation and you have a staggering length of

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time, quantity and duration of water degradation. Is this action consistent with what we have been working toward for the health of the Chesapeake Bay for so long?????

The county and state have spent 5 million dollars to develop Fort Smallwood Historic Fort and Park as a premier boat launching facility, fishing platform, beach/swimming, and family destination that is within 1.7 miles of the initial proposed disposal area. Subsequent expansion plans for placement of dredged material in CAD sites without the cap layer apparently surround the park.

Although global trade is here to stay, it is not without environmental impact. Ships at sea would constitute the fifth largest fossil fuel consuming country, if viewed as a whole. Let us not further the environmental impact by ignoring local decisions we make, which to save money, result in contaminated fish and bottom dwellers.

There is a dry-dredge county operated disposal area within ½ mile of our property and I fully support its' use. I cannot believe there are not sites where dikes and reconstruction of eroded land can be reclaimed as was done at Poplar Island. Yes, it may cost more to enact, but what is the alternative hidden cost imposed on residents and bay health if not addressed.

I close with the final argument of responsible decisions. Years ago people were upset as their electric bill could be increased by a few dollars if a wind farm was approved. I ask you, how much has **your** insurance bill been escalated due to real impacts of global warming. Insurance companies don't buy into **no** climate impact argument professed by many. Don't continue to make shortsighted decisions.

Allow the passage of SB 353 to help protect our environment.

Sincerely,
David Copley, AIA ret