

Testimony in favor of SB969

Stream and Watershed Restoration - Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

To: Hon. Brian Feldman, Chair, Hon. Cheryl Kagan, Vice-chair and members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Jerry Kickenson

Date: March 4, 2024

I am writing in **favor of Senate Bill 969**, Stream and Watershed Restoration - Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

This legislation will provide the direction, authority – and funding - needed to ensure Maryland establishes a coordinated approach to watershed restoration that is informed by science and data. The bill will establish a pilot program to identify up to 5 impaired watersheds across Maryland. Watersheds selected for the program will be subject to a comprehensive planning and permitting process bringing together all relevant stakeholders to improve water quality on an expedited timeline using a variety of practices. The goal of the program is to make real, measurable progress in water quality on an expedited timeline.

With the very mixed results of the Chesapeake Bay Program, many of us Maryland residents are tiring and frustrated by decades of halting progress on the Bay and watershed cleanup. It is long past time for new approaches. Maryland waters are a priceless resource and a large reason why I live, work and play in the state. Let's get serious about protecting those waters!

I respectfully urge you to reach a **favorable** report for SB969.

Respectfully yours,

Jerry Kickenson

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