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SPEAKER PRO TEM
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Environment and Transportation
Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Environment

Natural Resources,
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The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 344
Maryland Environmental Service – Membership of Board of Directors -
Alterations

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Colleagues,

I'm happy to be here today to present House Bill 344, which would remove the State Treasurer from the Maryland Environmental Service (MES) Board of Directors and replace that position with the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning or their designee.

With me are the leaders from each of the organizations, Treasurer Dereck E. Davis, Secretary of Planning Rebecca Flora, and Dr. Charles Glass, Executive Director of MES.

To give you some background for this change: In 2021, the Treasurer was placed on the MES Board of Directors as part of the MES Reform Act. As many of you may recall, that legislation restructured MES's governing body—the MES Board of Directors—following revelations of the prior executive director's actions. In 2021, the treasurer was Nancy Kopp.

But, by 2023, circumstances had changed significantly. Treasurer Kopp retired in late 2021 and then Delegate and Chair of Economic Matters, Dereck Davis was elected by the General Assembly to take her place as Treasurer. Then, in 2023, serious issues with the management of the Maryland 529 College Savings Plan emerged. The realization that the issues would not easily be resolved led the Maryland General Assembly to transfer management of the 529 Plan to the Office of the State Treasurer.

By July 2023, the Treasurer's office had developed a plan to reimburse families and ensure the stability of the plan, but the time and resources needed to manage this program since then have led to a significant strain on the Treasurer's office's resources.

This bill provides a solution that will assist both MES and the Treasurer's office by replacing the Treasurer with the Secretary of Planning on the MES Board.

I urge a favorable vote on this legislation.