



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

Senate Bill 225

Environment - Interjurisdictional Watersheds - Flood Management

Position: Informational
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Date: February 3, 2025
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) offers the following **INFORMATIONAL** testimony regarding SB 225. MDE has collaborated closely with the bill sponsor to fully understand and align with the bill's legislative intent. We commend the sponsor's leadership on this and other clean water issues as the State proactively addresses the escalating challenges of flooding. This is a policy area that needs additional study and attention and we look forward to continued engagement with the sponsor.

In general, MDE supports watershed and flood planning efforts at both the state and local levels. Climate change and population growth continue to heighten the need for proactive flood resilience strategies further amplifying the importance of such efforts.

Senate Bill 225 aims to enhance flood management by requiring MDE to designate Carroll Creek, Gwynns Falls, Jones Falls, Herring Run, and Patapsco River watersheds as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds through statute. Currently, Carroll Creek, Gwynns Falls, and Jones Falls are designated as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds in regulation (see COMAR 26.17.02.07).

The bill as drafted only requires that MDE designate Carroll Creek, Gwynns Falls, Jones Falls, Herring Run, and Patapsco River watersheds as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds. Based on MDE's understanding of the legislative intent of the bill, the bill does not require any additional actions on the part of MDE or local governments, including: (1) the study of the designated watersheds by MDE; (2) the preparation of a flood management plan by a local government; (3) the review and approval of such a plan by MDE; or (4) any additional expansion of small pond reviews by MDE under § 5-503 of the Environment Article. As such, the fiscal ramification of the proposed law to MDE and local governments is minimal and can be absorbed by existing staff.

MDE appreciates the sponsor's efforts on this bill and the opportunity to offer **INFORMATIONAL** testimony regarding SB 225.