

Tuesday February 3, 2026

TO: Brian Feldman, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and Committee Members

FROM: Humna Sharif, The Nature Conservancy, Climate Adaptation Manager; Cait Kerr, The Nature Conservancy, State Policy Manager

POSITION: Support SB 225 Environment – Interjurisdictional Watersheds – Flood Management

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 225, Environment – Interjurisdictional Watersheds – Flood Management introduced by Senators Washington and Brooks. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering data-driven, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water, air, and healthy, secure living environments for our human and natural communities today and in the generations to come.

Marylanders are facing challenges due to tidal and non-tidal flooding and extreme weather events. The [recent report](#) from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the [climate pollution reduction plans](#) our state agencies have prepared are a testament to Maryland’s commitment toward a coordinated, whole of government approach to addressing the root cause of these challenges. TNC sees SB 225 as a positive addition to the suite of legislation that Maryland has already passed and will need to pass as we prepare our state for future environmental hazards and reduce Maryland’s flood risk. SB 225 improves upon existing Maryland flood management regulations by requiring that certain high-risk areas that cross county level jurisdictional boundaries in the state be defined as “Interjurisdictional Flood Hazard Watersheds.” Within Maryland regulation, and as applied by MDE, an interjurisdictional watershed refers to an area of land situated on two or more jurisdictions that drains all streams and rainfalls to a common outlet.

SB255 names the following areas for the special designation:

1) Carroll Creek in Frederick City and Frederick County; 2) Gwynns Falls in Baltimore City and Baltimore County; 3) Jones Falls in Baltimore City and Baltimore County; 4) Herring Run in Baltimore City and Baltimore County. Additional areas for this designation include the Patapsco River, including all headwaters and tributaries in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Carroll County, and Anne Arundel County,

TNC supports this bill language, and we strongly recommend naming and including additional interjurisdictional watersheds within this legislation. In particular, the above sub-watersheds drain into the watersheds for Gunpowder, Chester, Nanticoke, and Wicomico rivers, which we believe should also be recognized as interjurisdictional. Managing our state's watersheds as interjurisdictional watersheds allows for more collaboration among local governments and allows for appropriate review of flood management plans for these watersheds.

In [MDE's recent Climate Implementation Plan](#), the agency has shared goals for updating stormwater and flood-management regulations to account for increases in rainfall and include climate-sensitive erosion standards. We support and commend MDE's leadership in planning proactively. SB 225 aligns with MDE's stated priorities and regulations.

Building community and ecosystem resilience to flooding requires diligent coordination from all sectors of the government - MDE plays a key role in mitigating flood risk. We commend Senator Washington and Brooks for their leadership in helping make MDE's purview of reviewing and managing flood management plans stronger.

Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 225.