

SB0225_Environment_Interjurisdictional_Waterways_F

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0225

Environment – Interjurisdictional Waterways – Flood Management

Bill Sponsor: Senator Washington

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0225 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

There are many aspects of climate change that continue to wreak havoc on the lives of Marylanders. One of the most dangerous aspects is flash flooding. There are several areas in Maryland that urgently require mitigation strategies for chronic flooding.

This bill, if enacted, would set aside the following areas as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds:

- Carroll Creek in Frederick City and Frederick County
- Gwinns Falls in Baltimore City and Baltimore County
- Jones Falls in Baltimore City and Baltimore County
- Herring Run in Baltimore City and Baltimore County

In addition, the Patapsco River, including all headwaters and tributaries in Baltimore city, Baltimore County, Howard County, Carroll County, and Anne Arundel County would be set aside as interjurisdictional flood hazard waterways.

This would ensure that a comprehensive flood management plan would be in place with mitigation strategies for anticipated flooding. This will protect the citizens in those areas from penitential loss of life as well as severe property damage.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB 225 Environment_Interjurisdictional Watersheds

Uploaded by: Humna Sharif

Position: FAV

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.

SB225 - Sen. Mary Washington - Written Testimony.p

Uploaded by: Mary Washington

Position: FAV

MARY L. WASHINGTON, PH.D
Legislative District 43
Baltimore City and Baltimore County

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Subcommittees

Chair, Education
Environment

Joint Committees

Senate Chair, Administrative, Executive,
and Legislative Review

The Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal
Bays Critical Areas

Chair, Baltimore City Senate Delegation



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Written Testimony of Senator Mary Washington
Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
February 3, 2026

SUPPORT - Senate Bill 225
Environment - Interjurisdictional Watersheds - Flood Management

Dear Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 225. SB225 is substantially the same as SB42 heard during the 2025 Session, received a favorable report from this committee, and passed out of the Senate as drafted. The bill before the Committee is intended to facilitate coordination among local governments and the state in the management of our waterways. This legislation builds upon existing requirements under Title 5, Water Resources, and DOES NOT require counties to draft new flood management plans or studies. This bill serves a narrow but important purpose: it codifies existing interjurisdictional flood hazard watershed designations so that Maryland's flood management laws clearly and consistently reflect stormwater and flood management across the state.

Additionally, Maryland has recognized that flooding does not stop at municipal or county lines, and that there are significant challenges to the Department's ability to predict and manage watershed-wide impacts and risks or support mitigation or restoration coordination, due in part to fragmented frameworks, uneven resource distribution, localized, outdated, or inconsistent data on flood events. Under its responsibilities in §§ 5-803 and 5-503, the Department of the Environment has designated interjurisdictional watersheds and impacts within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed as a part of flood management planning.

SB225 adds the Patapsco River watershed because it plays a crucial role in Maryland's economy, supporting numerous industries and being home to key infrastructure, such as the Port of Baltimore, which is vital for commerce. Additionally, the area surrounding the Patapsco holds a substantial population, making coordinated flood management efforts vital for the safety and well-being of many residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 225.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Washington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and the last name "Washington" clearly distinguishable.

Senator Mary Washington
Maryland State Senate, District 43

Support SB 225 - Interjurisdictional Watersheds

Uploaded by: Susan Radke

Position: FAV



Catonsville Indivisible Group

Support for Senate Bill 225 (SB 225) Environment – Interjurisdictional Watersheds – Flood Management

My name is Susan Radke and am a co-leader with Catonsville Indivisible Group, a grassroots group of constituents living in Catonsville, Southwest Baltimore County, Maryland who are dedicated to protecting progressive and democratic values.

The **Catonsville Indivisible Group** and I strongly support SB 225 which also designates the Patapsco River as an interjurisdictional flood hazard watershed. The legislation is vital to protect our communities in Oella and Catonsville as the Patapsco River runs through these areas in Baltimore County with tributaries from Howard County feeding the Patapsco River below Ellicott City to Oella, Maryland.

Currently, there is development occurring along the Patapsco River at the old Ellicott Mill in Oella where the flour mill is being redeveloped into a multi-use 190 luxury apartments, retail and destination restaurants in a flood plain. Baltimore County approved four additional floors to this building, and to this date, there appears to be no final flood management plan for this structure. Ellicott City and Oella has a long history of flooding because of the Howard County watersheds as well as flooding from the Patapsco River. This will impact the new development being built in Oella, MD. Howard County is remediating flash flooding events in Ellicott City by diverting stormwater directly into the Patapsco River right above the luxury apartment development where the land is not high enough to prevent flooding. Therefore, Senate Bill 225 will ensure that these watersheds are responsibly managed and that all flood management plans are subject to review and approval.

The Catonsville Indivisible Group and I urge the Senate to vote yes and pass this legislation with no amendments.

Susan Radke, co-leader, on behalf of the Catonsville Indivisible Group.

SB225 Exhibit 3. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV



Hurricane Agnes (1972)
Destruction along the Patapsco River in Baltimore County.

SB225 Exhibit 4. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV

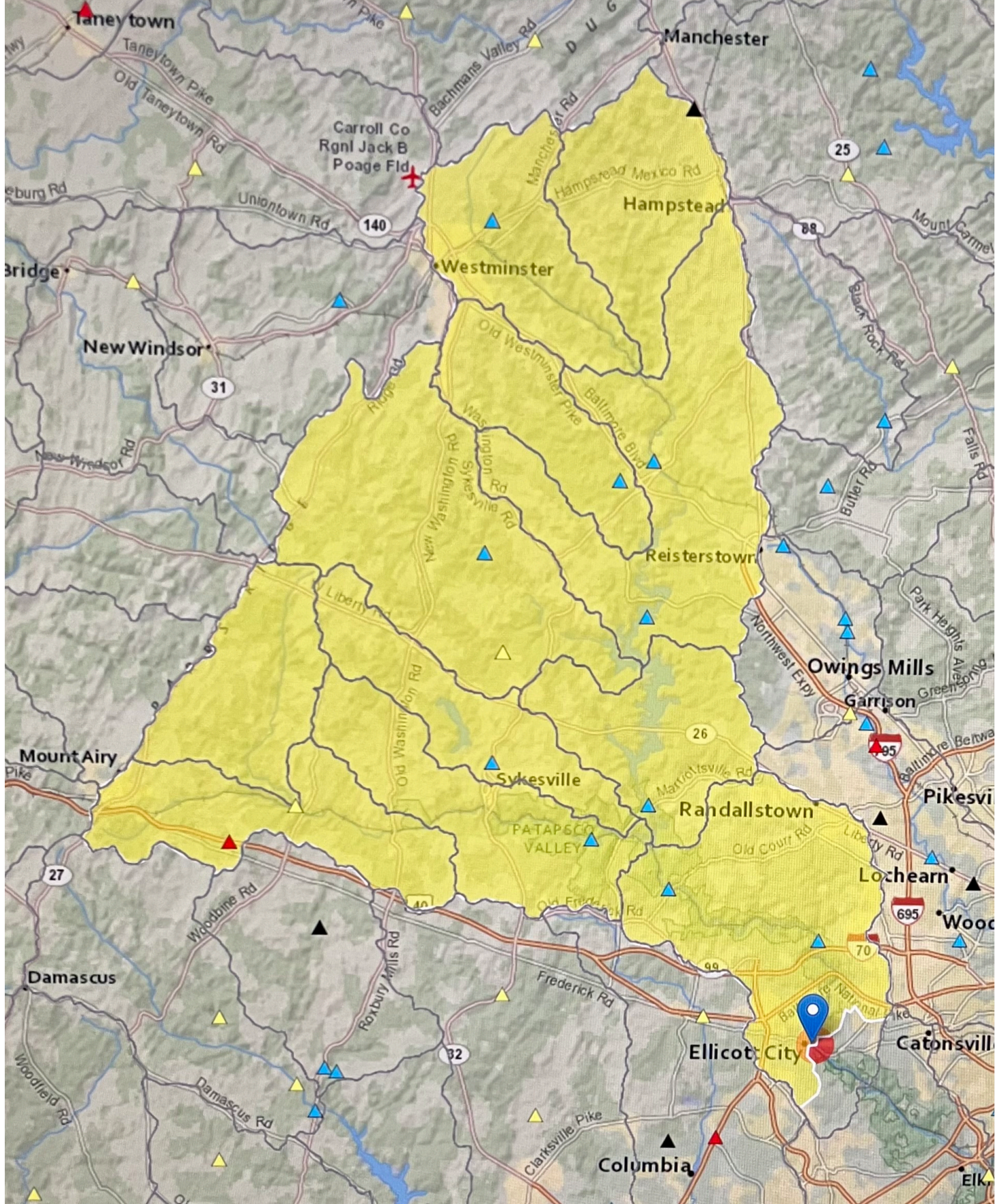


Patapsco River and Howard County tributaries converge at the Village of Oella, in Baltimore County.

SB225 Exhibit 5. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV

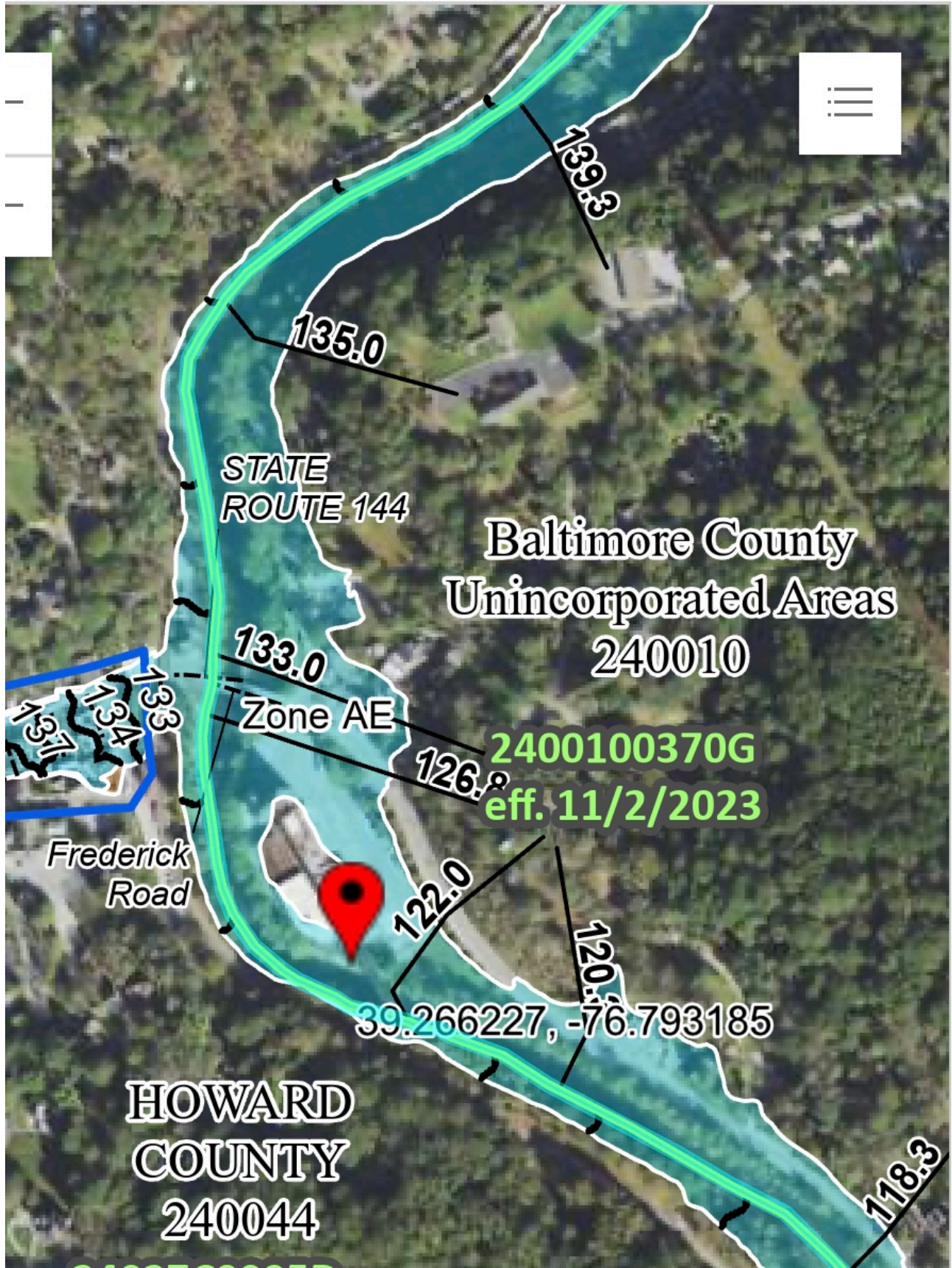


USGS StreamStats:
Approx 300 sq mile Drainage Basin funnels to Oella in Baltimore County.
Counties in Basin include Baltimore, Howard, Carroll and Baltimore City.

SB225 Exhibit 6. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV



FEMA Map updated 2023.

Wilkins-Rogers Flour Mill **building** in Baltimore County removed from floodplain.

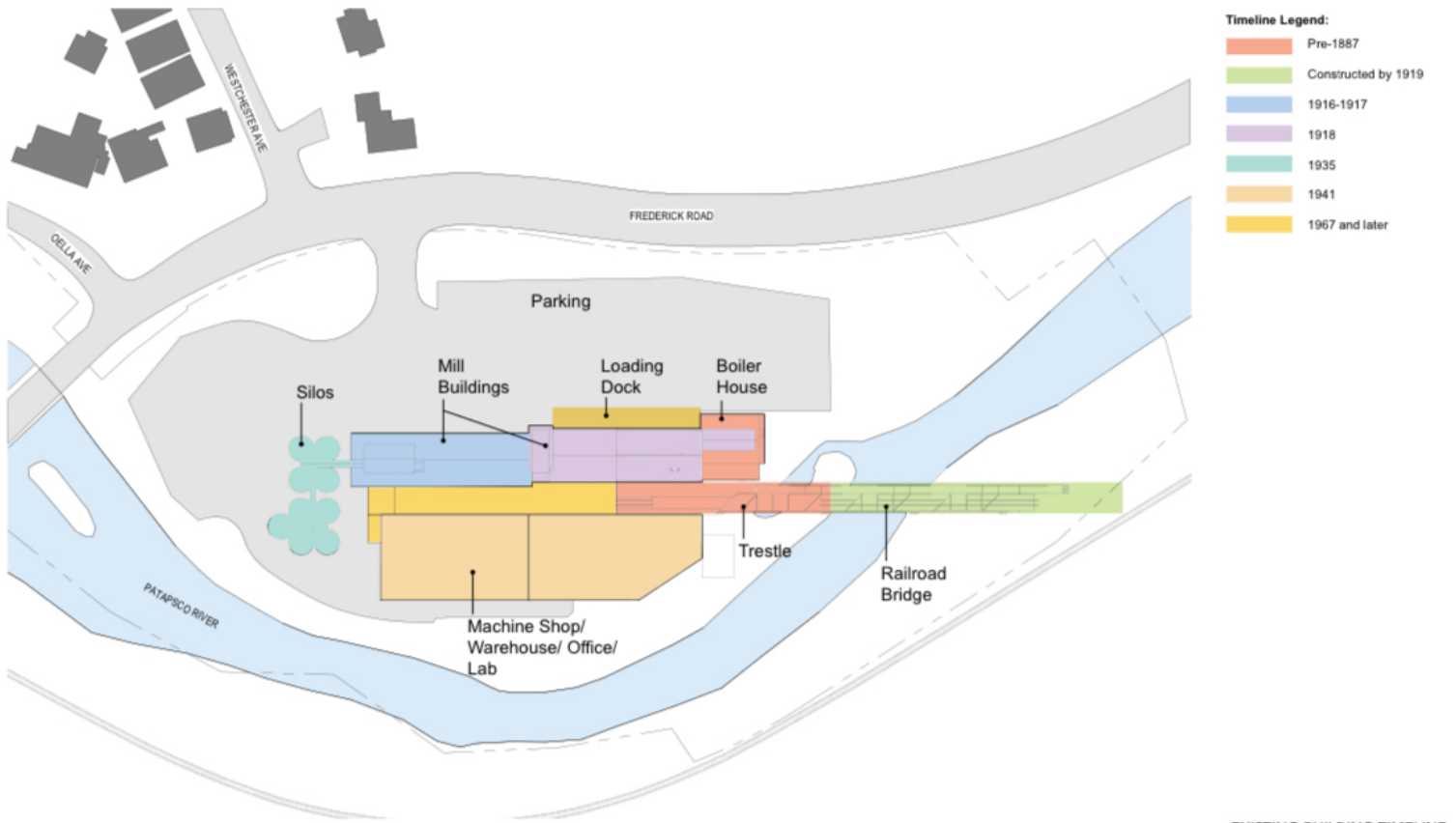
SB225 Exhibit 7. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV

ELLICOTT MILL

ALEXANDER DESIGN STUDIO | TERRA NOVA VENTURES



ELLICOTT MILL

ALEXANDER DESIGN STUDIO | TERRA NOVA VENTURES

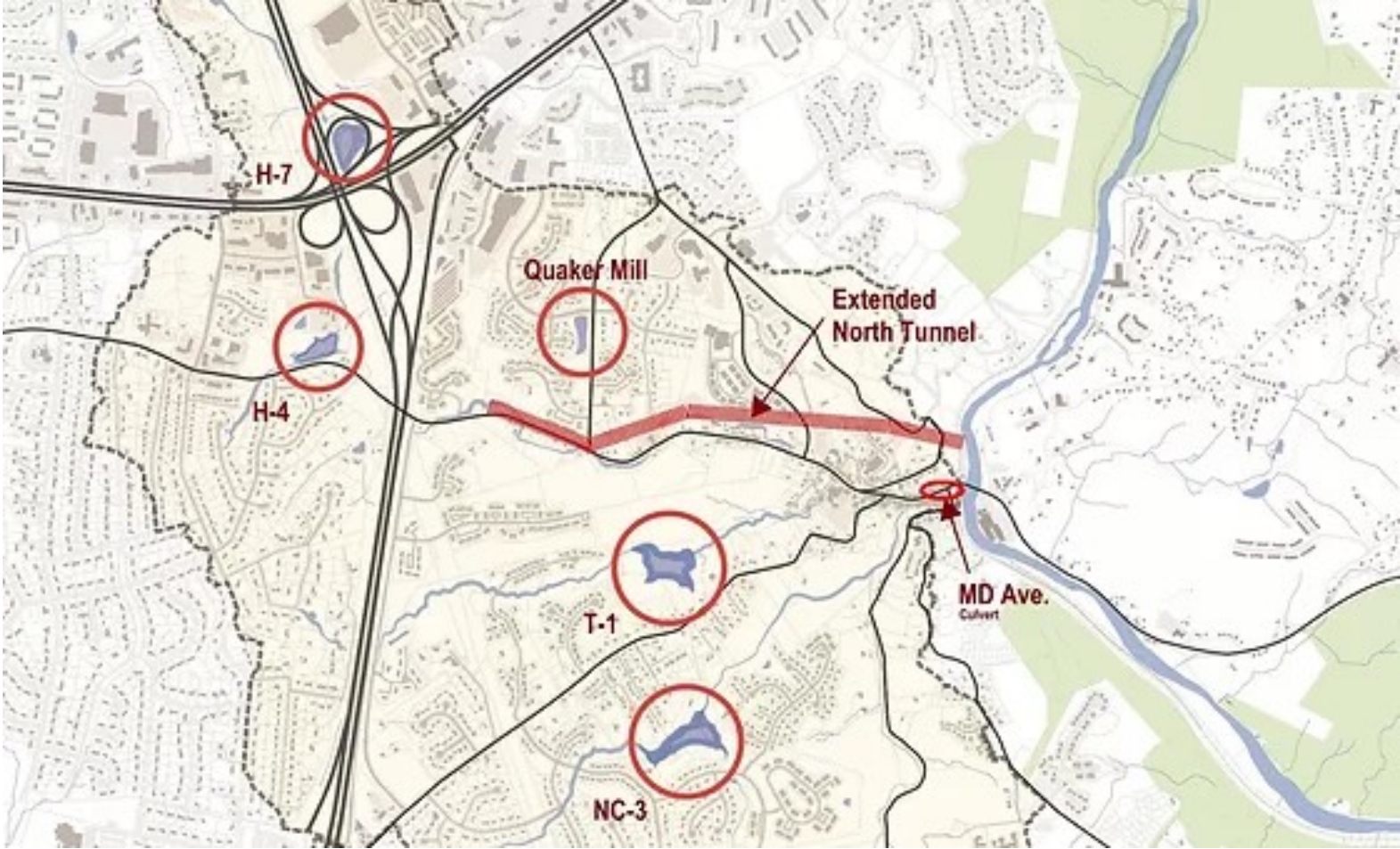


2020 Wilkins-Rogers Mill property, in Baltimore County, rezoned for multi-use.
2022 Baltimore County approved Ellicott Mill redevelopment — to include 190 luxury apartments, retail, destination restaurant, with 4 floor addition to 190,000 sq ft building; forest buffer and open space waivers.

SB225 Exhibit 8. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV



CURRENT Howard County constructing mile-long, 18' diameter flood tunnel, with outfall into Baltimore County and upriver of Ellicott Mill project.



SB225 Exhibit 1. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions.

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV



Hurricane Agnes 1972
Patapsco River flooding Wilkins-Rogers Flour Mill in Baltimore County.

SB225 Testimony. Winnie Carpenter. Oella-Catonsvil

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV

January 30, 2026

Senate Bill 225

Testimony by Winnie Carpenter, Founder — Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB225 (*Environment - Interjurisdictional Watersheds — Flood Management*.)

Thank you to Senator Mary Washington and our Senator Ben Brooks for sponsoring the Bill.

I have been a lifelong resident of Maryland, and have lived in Oella, in Baltimore County, for the past 22 years. Oella is a small mill village, with no post office, so we have been assigned a Howard County zip code — 21043, Ellicott City.

Having that designation has reduced our voice during flood events. It is a well known fact that Howard County floods in Ellicott City, but flooding also occurs in Ellicott City, *Baltimore County*.

I have included Exhibits for your review.

In 1972, Hurricane Agnes devastated areas on *both* sides of the Patapsco River, in Howard and in Baltimore County. All the flood damage in 1972 was caused by bottom-up flooding from the Patapsco River. Infrastructure damage occurred to shops, roads, and homes — the Patapsco River bridge wasn't rebuilt for a year. The Trolley Stop restaurant in Baltimore County has preserved the "flood line" in their back room to share with patrons. The walls are lined with pictures from the 1972 flood.

Two large stone homes built by the Ellicott brothers were also destroyed in Baltimore County during Agnes. A third home, built by George Ellicott, was moved across Frederick Road 15 years later to higher ground. (Everyone who gathered to witness collectively held their breath as the home was moved on wheels across the road.)

Since that time, climate change is becoming more obvious in our area.

The first top-down flooding occurred in Howard County in 2011. The storm sent a flood of water down Main Street, starting beyond the West End of Old Ellicott City. Then 2016 flooded the town again, and another storm in 2018 caused a third death. However, these storms flooded *not only* Howard County but also Baltimore County. The Patapsco River and all these tributaries converge at the bridge and flow into Baltimore County. In fact, according to USGS StreamStat data, Oella sits at the bottom of a drainage basin funnel of nearly 300 square miles! Areas contributing floodwater in that basin are from other communities in Baltimore County, Howard & Carroll Counties, and Baltimore City.

There is also Cooper Branch in Baltimore County, that runs along our Trolley Trail #9 that floods Oella. Baltimore County recognized that flooding occurred along that branch and mitigated an area near Oella Avenue in 2019. It flooded again in 2020, sending a river of water down Westchester Avenue in Baltimore County, to the Wilkins-Rogers Flour Mill property.

(We did not realize that the FEMA floodplain map was in the process of being updated until 2023, but the most significant change was the mill *building* was taken out of the floodplain, leaving the remainder of the property in the floodplain.)

The mill was operational until 2020, and when it closed Baltimore County changed the zoning to multi-use. In 2022 Baltimore County approved a redevelopment plan for the mill property: 190 luxury apartments, retail, and a destination restaurant were approved. Waivers for the forest buffer and open space were granted. 4 additional floors were also approved to be added to the already 190,000 sq ft building. Trees will be removed along the First National Historic Road — Frederick Road — to accommodate widening the road.

Meanwhile, in Howard County, the *Safe and Sound* plan moves forward. Shops have been demolished on Lower Main Street, retention ponds have been built and the ambitious 18', mile-long Extended North Tunnel is under construction — with the outfall directly across the river from Oella, *upriver* from the Patapsco River bridge and the mill property under redevelopment.

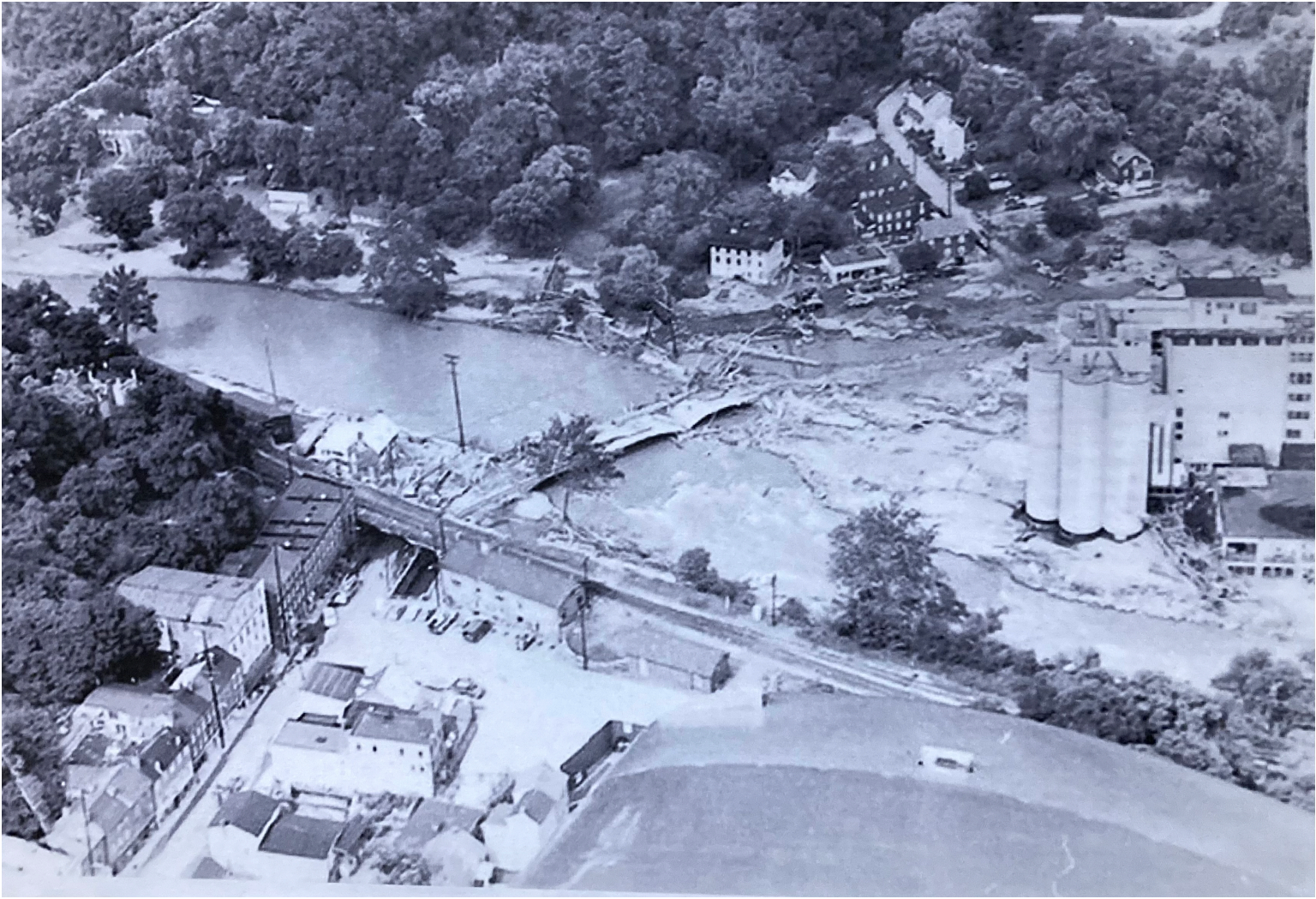
There has been admissions from leaders that counties do not coordinate, or even share, plans for development in our watersheds. We are hopeful that this Bill can identify our Patapsco watershed as a interjurisdictional flood hazard watershed for certain planning purposes and keep our residents safe from flood events.

Thank you.

SB225.Exhibit 2. Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

Uploaded by: Winnie Carpenter

Position: FAV



Hurricane Agnes 1972

Destruction from Patapsco River flooding to Baltimore County on the east side of the river and to Howard County on the west side.

MDE SB 225 INF.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: INFO



**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.