



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

House Bill 34

Municipalities - Open Drainage Inlets - Required Grating Systems (Mason's Law)

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To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: FAV

From: Matt Stegman,
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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS House Bill 34** which would require municipalities throughout the state to install appropriate grating covers over open drainage inlets. Grated covers allow stormwater to enter the inlet while preventing large debris from entering or obstructing. The bill comes in response to a tragic occurrence this past summer where a young man lost his life after being swept away in a flash flooding incident.

Unfortunately, the type of flooding event that cost Mason Kearns his life are increasingly common in Maryland, a consequence of continued development and more frequent intense storms associated with climate change. In fact, inland flooding in Maryland is projected to increase 50% by 2050.¹

There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to stormwater management. HB 34 proposes one simple solution to ensure new and existing stormwater inlets are safe and work as needed, free of large debris. Additionally, CBF urges the General Assembly prioritize stormwater runoff, which is the fastest growing source of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, now and in the years ahead. While other pollution sources like wastewater and agriculture have trended down in recent years, stormwater pollution has only increased. Not long ago, Maryland was considered a national leader in green infrastructure, which can stop runoff before it harms people, properties, and waterways. These often-natural solutions, such as tree roots and healthy soils, absorb rainwater like a sponge, rather than let it swiftly wash away to cause flooding and pollution.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 34, which will help save lives and prevent property damage.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

¹ <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/effects-climate-change-maryland/>