

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

Senate Bill 722

(Senators Henson and Augustine)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Environment and Transportation

Department of the Environment - Definition of Ecological Restoration

This bill establishes a definition of “ecological restoration” in the Environment Article; the term means an activity undertaken with the goal of recovering, re-establishing, or enhancing a degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystem through (1) improvements to physical, chemical, or biological characteristics or processes; (2) returning natural or historical functions or services; or (3) protecting or improving resiliency.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The bill is not anticipated to directly affect State finances or operations.

Local Effect: The bill is not anticipated to directly affect local finances or operations.

Small Business Effect: Minimal or none.

Analysis

Current Law: Although ecological restoration is referenced in conjunction with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Policy Advisory Committee under Title 5, Subtitle 14 of the Environment Article, the phrase is not defined in State statute or regulations.

Chapter 465 of 2022 required the Maryland Department of the Environment’s (MDE) Wetlands and Waterways Program Division, in consultation and coordination with specified entities, including the Department of Natural Resources, to conduct a comprehensive study, analysis, and evaluation of various items related to the permitting and completion of ecological restoration projects. The Wetlands and Waterways Program Division was required to develop legislative and regulatory recommendations based on the

results of the study, analysis, and evaluation. MDE submitted the resulting [Ecological Restoration Permitting Study Report](#) to the General Assembly in August 2024.

Additional Comments: This bill addresses one of the recommendations included in the Ecological Restoration Permitting Study Report referenced above (see pp. 7-8). Specifically, the report recommended that the General Assembly should adopt a definition for ecological restoration that is consistent with the definition included in the bill. The report further stated that MDE will incorporate the statutory definition in regulation.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 1155 (Delegate Stein) - Environment and Transportation.

Information Source(s): Maryland Environmental Service; Harford, Montgomery, and Wicomico counties; Baltimore City; Maryland Association of Counties; Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority; Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Maryland Department of Agriculture; Maryland Department of the Environment; Department of General Services; Department of Natural Resources; Board of Public Works; Maryland Department of Transportation; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2025
caw/lgc Third Reader - March 15, 2025
Revised - Amendment(s) - March 15, 2025

Analysis by: Kathleen P. Kennedy

Direct Inquiries to:

(410) 946-5510

(301) 970-5510