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Howard County

Economic Matters Committee

Subcommittees

Banking, Consumer Protection,
and Commercial Law

Property and Casualty Insurance

Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 29, 2020

HB0078 (SB0172) Bay Restoration Fund – Authorized Uses

SPONSOR: Delegate Courtney Watson

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Good afternoon Chairman Barve and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me to present House Bill 78.

This bill will allow flexibility and discretion to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to use funds located in the third priority of the Wastewater Account of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund to help local jurisdictions complete projects related not only to water quality, but also climate resiliency and flood control.

Local jurisdictions are working to improve their resiliency to climate change by planning capital projects that control runoff from climate change-induced, intense rain storms that can drop six inches of rain in 90 minutes as one did in Ellicott City in 2018. These projects are beyond the scope of local government to fund without help from both the state and federal governments.

With climate change upon us, we know that we cannot meet our water quality goals without addressing storm water runoff. Water quality and water quantity are inextricably linked. This bill recognizes this, with the understanding that the majority of funding within the Wastewater Account within the Chesapeake Bay Fund would continue to be directed to improvements to major and minor wastewater treatment plants to help meet our water quality targets.

This bill simply gives discretion to MDE in the last priority of the fund, to provide funding to climate resiliency flood control projects that MDE deems beneficial.

There is one amendment which was suggested by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in conjunction with MDE that we accept as a friendly amendment and has (or will be) provided to you. It simply changes a few words to better reflect the intent of the legislation to allow funding “relating to water quality, climate resiliency or flood control”.

In creating this bill, I sought consensus from the staff at the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the League of Conservation Voters, Clean Water Action, and Chesapeake Bay Foundation. You should have received a letter from MDE and on our panel today we have:

- Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive
- Doug Meyers, Maryland Scientist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Ben Alexandro, Water Quality Director, League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.