



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB614– Environmental Accountability and Transparency Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee**

February 19, 2020

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of HB614 – the Environmental Accountability and Transparency Act** - on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland’s Eastern Shore with 3,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

On the Eastern Shore, due to a combination of increasing development, sea level rise, and increasing frequency and intensity of rainfall, we are receiving **more and more citizen complaints of environmental violations** (e.g., unpermitted bank clearing in the Critical Area, sediment plumes associated with construction sites, and unpermitted shoreline work) that we report to the appropriate state or local agency. One small environmental violation can have a lasting harmful impact on our local waterways.

Unfortunately, our regulatory agencies do not currently have the resources to adequately enforce or address environmental violations on the Eastern Shore. We consistently document environmental violations with little to no meaningful enforcement actions. Tracking and following up on violations is time consuming for the public and the agencies. Overall, the lack of enforcement on the Shore is detrimental to Bay restoration efforts and to our communities.

By creating an Ombudsman and clear reporting requirements, HB614 will provide an important resource to enforcement agencies, promote accountability, provide transparency to the public, and ultimately produce better outcomes for the Bay and our rivers.

For these reasons, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB614**.

Sincerely,

Tim Trumbauer

Chester Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

ShoreRivers

Jeff Horstman, Executive Director

Tim Trumbauer, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper
Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

Main Office
114 S. Washington St.
Suite 301
Easton, MD 21601
443.385.0511

Regional Office
111A North Main St.
Galena, MD 21635
410.810.7556

shorerivers.org

Regional Office
207 S. Water St.
Unit B
Chestertown, MD 21620
410.810.7556