



**Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 716 – Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on  
Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere  
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee**

February 24, 2020

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments IN SUPPORT of **Senate Bill 716 – Solid Waste Management - Prohibition on Releasing a Balloon Into the Atmosphere**. ShoreRivers represents more than 3,500 local members and our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

Professionally for the past 3 years as Riverkeeper, and personally as an avid boater, I have had the fortune to spend a significant amount of time on Eastern Bay and the Miles and Wye River. I have noticed that trash in these waterways and all of our local waterways is an increasing problem, from minute particles like micro-plastics to larger trash such as Styrofoam containers, plastic bottles, and balloons.

In fact, **balloons are one of the most common pieces of trash that I recover in Eastern Bay** – I commonly retrieve at least one balloon from the water when completing water quality testing runs during the season. I recognize that many balloon releases are done with good intentions, yet they are tantamount to indiscriminate pollution of our environment and our waterways.

Thank you for your leadership by taking an important step to prevent trash from entering Maryland's rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

For these reasons, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **Senate Bill 716**.

Sincerely,

**Elle Bassett**

Miles-Wye Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

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***ShoreRivers***

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

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