

TAKOMA PARK MOBILIZATION

Environment Committee

Committee: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs
Testimony on: SB0227 - “Water Pollution - Stormwater Management Regulations and Watershed Implementation Plans - Review and Update”
Organization: Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
Person Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: January 21, 2021

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of SB0227 and we urge you to vote favorably. The bill will increase community resilience and mitigate urban and coastal flooding and water pollution impacts by adapting Maryland’s stormwater design standards to increased precipitation due to climate change and by imposing climate-smart criteria on private-sector development to help the state meet pollution load requirements by 2025.

Outdated Data and Montgomery County’s Climate Action Plan: Maryland’s efforts to protect local waters and communities from pollution and restore the Chesapeake Bay are based on outdated assumptions about precipitation and ignore the very real impacts of climate change. For example, Montgomery County’s recently-released draft Climate Action Plan, a roadmap for the County to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2035, includes extensive information about climate-driven hazards such as increased precipitation. The County’s draft Plan also provides numerous actions to adapt to climate change including impacts from increased stormwater runoff and flooding. However, state and local regulators currently are using outdated rainfall data in their permits and modelling. In order for Montgomery County and other counties across the state to adequately address the identified threats from increased precipitation and flooding, the state must update its stormwater standards.

How SB0227 Fixes the Problems Created by Outdated Data and Modelling: This bill addresses the impacts of climate change and increased precipitation and flooding by:

- 1) requiring regular updates to Maryland’s outdated technical design standards for stormwater and erosion control practices; and
- 2) ensuring that the last round of water pollution permit renewals address increased stormwater pollution attributable to climate-driven precipitation before the 2025 Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) deadline.

In addition to protecting public safety and water quality through the proper design and operation of stormwater management facilities, the bill also will implement a channel protection strategy to reduce downstream erosion in receiving streams and implement water quantity control strategies to prevent increases in the frequency and magnitude of out-of-bank flooding from large, less frequent storm events.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote for SB0227.