



January 21, 2021

Senate Bill 0227

**Water Pollution – Stormwater Management Regulations and Watershed Implementation Plans –
Review and Update**

Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Adequate storage and treatment of stormwater from new construction projects is essential to protect our communities, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay in the face of a changing climate. Current stormwater regulations are based upon decades-old precipitation data and built to handle the storms of the last century rather than those we've already experienced this century. This bill represents a commonsense, adaptive management approach to help counties manage our every-changing stormwater problems.

The current regulations require new construction projects in Anne Arundel County to treat what is known as the one-year, 24-hour rainfall event. This is a storm that is expected to occur, on average, once per year based upon historical precipitation data. Over the past decade, the Baltimore-Washington International Airport has recorded fourteen such rainfall events, including three over a single week in July of 2018.¹

This bill does not seek to prescribe the exact standards or engineering solutions needed to combat these increasing storm events. It acknowledges that such solutions are best designed by regulators with input from a wide array of stakeholders, including counties, municipalities and academic experts. Rather than being overly prescriptive, this bill calls upon the Maryland Department of the Environment to begin an iterative, adaptive process of reviewing and incorporating the latest precipitation data every five years, and adapting other stormwater regulations as necessary to protect communities and resources. Those protections are sorely needed.

Anne Arundel County has spent over \$500 M dollars since 2010 on restoration efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Yet stormwater flooding, even from newly constructed projects built using the latest stormwater standards, continue to erode stream banks leading to costly repairs that are financed by county residents. According to the County's Department of Public Works and Bureau of Watershed Restoration and Protection, it costs approximately \$2.6 M to restore each mile of degraded stream, and \$0.5 M to dredge a tidal tributary of sediment. Each year, counties are being asked to invest more taxpayer dollars to protect the Chesapeake Bay.

We continue to meet those requests, but we need help. We need stormwater standards to keep pace with climate change.

For these reasons, Anne Arundel County urges a FAVORABLE vote WITH AMENDMENTS.

¹ NCEI CDO. Baltimore-Washington International Airport Station Precipitation Data for January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/cdo-web/>.