

Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals

**House Bill 653
Conservation Finance Act**

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

March 29, 2022

Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation
3 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals (CWRP), we strongly support HB 653 – Conservation Finance Act. CWRP was founded in November of 2020 and represents Maryland professionals whose daily work improves the health of Maryland’s waters and our prized Chesapeake Bay. We thank Senator Elfreth for leading the charge on this important issue and the Senate’s tremendous support of advancing policy that protects the Chesapeake Bay.

This bill creates frameworks across several agencies and funds that will allow greater partnership between government and private industry that will collectively have a direct impact on Maryland making measurable growth in protecting our environment and our waters. Additionally, we support the addition of language in House Bill 653 requiring assessment and reporting on the effectiveness of pay-for-success contracts. The House Bill assigns the responsibility to the Maryland Environmental Service (MES). We do want to raise awareness of potential conflicts that could arise as MES is also a unit that can enter a pay-for-success contract meaning they would be validating the effectiveness of their own contracts. This may lead to conflicts of interest which the Legislature may want to address.

We thank the committee for their consideration of this important legislation and the issues we have raised. We look forward to working with you in the coming years to strengthen Maryland’s environmental laws.

Sincerely,

Liam O’Meara
President
Chesapeake Watershed Restoration Professionals