



MARYLAND COASTAL BAYS PROGRAM

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March 15, 2022

Senator Paul G. Pinsky
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401

Support for SB0945

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

The Maryland Coastal Bays Program thanks you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **Support of SB0945**. The Coastal Bays Program is a local watershed organization in Worcester County. Our mission is the protection, preservation and restoration of waters in the 5 coastal bays that make up our watershed. As part of our mission, we undertake many ecosystem restoration and enhancement projects within the watershed.

It has been our experience that implementing these projects within the existing State regulatory framework can be complex, time consuming and unnecessarily costly. While we understand that this work should not be exempt from regulatory review, we do believe that the process should be efficient. The regulatory review process and requirements presently used at the Maryland Department of the Environment were developed at a time when ecosystem restoration wasn't an established practice. The current regulations were established for the review of development projects like roads and other commercial and residential ventures. It was not established to review ecosystem restoration projects such as those undertaken by our organization and many other organizations which are working to improve water quality and habitat in Maryland.

A streamlined process for voluntary ecosystem restoration will improve the efficiency of these badly needed projects and will ultimately save the taxpayers money. It should be our objective to implement the most cost-effective and environmentally sound projects as possible. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment and we are very appreciative of your committee's leadership in moving forward with the passage of SB0945.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. Smith, Executive Director
Maryland Coastal Bays Program

Citizens joining with local, state, and federal governments to develop common sense solutions
to the bays' most pressing environmental problems.