



CITY OF HAVRE DE GRACE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

William T. Martin

February 25, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: FAVORABLE - HB 869 - Wetlands and Waterways Program - Authorizations for Ecological Restoration Projects

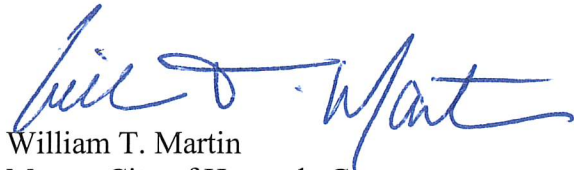
Chairman Barve and the honorable members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The City of Havre de Grace supports House Bill 869. If passed, HB 869 would establish a much-needed process for reviewing and evaluating applications for wetlands and waterways authorizations for ecological restoration projects.

The Environment Article, as currently written, does not differentiate between commercial development projects and ecological restoration projects. This lack of distinction creates a bureaucratic nightmare for stakeholders who are attempting to implement ecological restoration projects.

The City of Havre de Grace, located at the confluence of the Susquehanna River and the Chesapeake Bay, is a steward of our state's fragile ecology. Unfortunately, time and time again, the City has attempted to invest in our environment through ecological restoration projects designed to positively impact the health of the state's local wetlands and waterways. Despite these positive efforts to improve our environment, the City and similar local governments are met with a statutory and regulatory framework designed for commercial development projects, which is inherently designed to be cumbersome. These two project types have little in common with one another. If we intend on preserving and improving the health of Maryland's environment, then this unnecessary contradistinction must be correct.

If passed, HB 869 would establish the statutory and regulatory framework Maryland needs so that environmentally conscious stakeholders can easily invest in the future of our environment. The City of Havre de Grace requests the Environment and Transportation give HB 869 a FAVORABLE report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill T. Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William T. Martin
Mayor, City of Havre de Grace