

*"Protecting & Promoting the Marine
Construction Industry Through Unity
& Leadership."*



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March 3, 2022

Maryland House of Delegates
Environment & Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB1313 - *Environment – Exception to Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Requirements*

Dear Committee Chair Barve & Committee Members:

The Maryland Marine Contractors Association (M.M.C.A.) supports HB1313.

The M.M.C.A., established in 2008, is a tireless advocate for the protection and promotion of the marine construction industry in Maryland. It was our organization that championed the marine contractor licensure legislation back in 2010 with the goal of raising the professional bar within the industry and establishing a mutually beneficial working relationship with Federal, State, and Local regulators.

As it is now, the waiver process for an exemption from the living shoreline mandate, is heavily weighted in favor of disqualifying bulkheads, riprap, and other traditional stabilization measures - so much so that the recommendation of a licensed marine contractor is not even part of the scoring criteria. No two shorelines share identical attributes, which adds a layer of complexity that can't be adequately assessed on a waiver grading worksheet. Based on financial risk alone, but still within the framework of best management practices and regulatory guidance, marine contractors should be the final arbitrator when it comes to what stabilization methods to employ in any one given situation. HB1313 rightfully gives weight to the expert opinions of marine contractors who are best positioned to answer the question of 'what works' and 'what doesn't work' when it comes to shoreline stabilization. This practical hands-on experience adds value and meaning to any regulatory discussion. Reputable marine contractors, and M.M.C.A. members in particular, understand the importance of sound science-based environmental policy and regulations because our livelihoods depend on the Bay and her tributaries being healthy and vibrant. Protecting our waterways from sedimentation and nutrient run-off, all while safeguarding public and private investments in waterfront lands, is an essential service. Recognition of the importance of our trade should come in the way of 1) a permanent seat at the stakeholder table on all tidal wetland policy discussions, and 2) specific to HB1313, an influential voice in shoreline stabilization project development.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our favorable testimony on HB1313 and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Maryland Marine Contractors Association, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brandon S. Weems".

Brandon S. Weems
M.M.C.A. President

BSW/bmw