

March 6, 2023

**Written testimony for SB866 - Special Vehicle Registration Plates -
Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education
Foundation - Appropriation ¹**

Position: Favorable with Amendments

Submitted by: Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward



Connecting people and nature
in the Capital Region

natureforward.org

Dear Senate Budget and Taxation Committee,

Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) is the oldest independent environmental organization protecting nature in the DC metro region. Headquartered in Maryland, our mission is to inspire residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy. We thank the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB866 which we support favorably with amendments.

For many years, the Chesapeake Bay Trust has helped Nature Forward reach underserved and BIPOC communities; increase the impact of our native plants outreach, water quality awareness training, and stormwater management work; and transition to a new, more inclusive name. The Trust has supported multiple restoration projects at our headquarters at Woodend Nature Sanctuary that have had a direct, measurable impact on improving water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. The Trust is a key sponsor of both our Taking Nature Black and Naturally Latinos conferences that spotlight the voices, viewpoints, and leadership of environmental professionals of color.

The breadth and impact of our mission work for people and nature in Maryland has been greatly enhanced because of grantmaking by The Chesapeake Bay Trust. The Trust's support has enabled Nature Forward to inspire thousands of people in Maryland to love and protect nature through the following programs:

¹ SB866.Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation - Appropriation. Available at:
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/SB0866?ys=2023RS>



- Water quality monitoring and learning centers at Prince George's and Montgomery County streams
- MWEEs (Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience, a required curricular element) with Pre-K children at Montgomery Housing Partnership
- Green Infrastructure Tours and the Guide to Best Practices at Woodend Nature Sanctuary
- Stormwater Management at Woodend Nature Sanctuary with companion video to provide Spanish Language Landscape Professional Training on Green Infrastructure
- Long Branch BIPOC Youth Campaign for Litter Reduction, ¡Si se puede!: Growing a Community of Empowered Environmental Leaders in Long Branch²
- Latinx community outreach and water quality monitoring in Prince George's County
- Nature Programs for Veterans
- Plant It Forward! Native Plant Outreach Training
- Latinx Landscapers Training at Woodend Nature Sanctuary
- Creek Critters community science water quality programming for Long Branch
- Permeable Walkway and Pavers at Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay
- Riparian Forest Buffer Restoration at Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay
- Stream Stabilization Design for Woodend Nature Sanctuary to improve water quality in Rock Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay

We support SB866 with the following amendments to section 13-618 (c)(2) (vi) highlighted in bold as proposed by Senator Zucker:

- BEGINNING IN FISCAL YEAR 2025, AND FOR EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN AMOUNT FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST EQUAL TO THE **average** AMOUNT DISBURSED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (V) OF THIS PARAGRAPH **from fiscal year 2017 through FISCAL YEAR 2022, adjusted for inflation by the consumer price index CIP U for all urban consumers for the Baltimore metropolitan statistical area are** LESS THE AMOUNT DISBURSED UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (V) OF THIS PARAGRAPH IN THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING FISCAL YEAR IF THE DIFFERENCE IS A POSITIVE NUMBER.

² Nature Forward's Long Branch Community outreach work from 2019-2023. Available at: <https://natureforward.org/program/long-branch-community-outreach/>



If revenue managed by the Trust were to decline, our organization, along with many others in Maryland, would be directly and negatively impacted by a reduction in grant funds available to support our critical mission work for nature. On behalf of Nature Forward and our 28,000 members and supporters, we respectfully urge this committee for a favorable report SB866.

Sincerely,

Lisa Alexander
Executive Director
Nature Forward

Denisse Guitarra
Maryland Conservation Advocate
Nature Forward