



Testimony in SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT of SB866 – Special Vehicle Registration Plates - Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation – Appropriation

March 7, 2023

Dear Chairman Guzzone and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT** of **SB866** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

This bill will ensure that funding remains stable for the Chesapeake Bay Trust and Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation so that they can continue to provide grants and support to organizations throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Organizations like ShoreRivers depend on these grants to carry out our work every year. **Since 2017, ShoreRivers has received more than 53 grants totaling \$2.7 million from the Chesapeake Bay Trust, accounting for about a quarter of the grant funding received from state and federal sources.** If this funding stream were to be decreased it would have a major detrimental impact on our work and would disproportionately impact the Eastern Shore, where funding resources are already limited.

This grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Trust has allowed ShoreRivers to install ground-breaking wetlands restoration technology, provide Meaningful Environmental Educational Experiences to thousands of schoolchildren, plant hundreds of trees, engage hundreds of thousands of people on critical environmental topics like harmful algal blooms and climate change, and support community events that showcase our water monitoring programs, among many other things. **These grants, combined with the federal funding received by leveraging these grants, have enabled ShoreRivers to install more than 260 major restoration projects across our territory that are annually preventing more than 160,000 pounds of nitrogen, 17,000 pounds of phosphorus, and 5,500 tons of sediment from entering our rivers.** By using this funding and our expertise, we are able reduce nitrogen at a rate of about \$121 per pound, compared to the \$5,000 per pound that it costs in urban stormwater retrofits. These grants from the Chesapeake Bay Trust are incredibly cost effective and provide tremendous benefit for our local waterways and communities.

We support this bill because it will ensure a steady stream of funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust that organizations like ShoreRivers, and hundreds of others throughout the Bay watershed, depend on to continue doing on-the-ground work to protect and restore Chesapeake Bay. We urge the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB866 with the proposed revenue calculation amendment.**

Sincerely,

Zack Kelleher
Sassafras Riverkeeper, on behalf of ShoreRivers

ShoreRivers

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