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**Testimony encouraging a UNFAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 775 – Private Wetlands – Structural Shoreline Stabilization Measures**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
February 23, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **OPPOSITION** of SB775, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Living shorelines protect our shorelines from erosion while providing key habitats for our waterways and ecosystems. They provide a wide host of co-benefits, including improving water quality by capturing sediment and filtering nutrient runoff; providing shoreline access and habitat to both aquatic and terrestrial animals and shorebirds; and absorbing wave energy and making our shorelines more resilient. Our state legislature has recognized the importance of these projects by passing the Living Shoreline Protection Act in 2008, which requires shoreline property owners to use natural solutions to prevent erosion if feasible. Senate Bill 775 seeks to allow up to 10% of a shoreline to opt out of this requirement and to armor a shoreline with a structural component such as bulkhead or riprap. These armored structural components do not provide any of the benefits mentioned above and can result in more erosion, increase wave activity, and deeper waters not suitable for some aquatic or terrestrial habitats.

There is currently the ability to apply for a waiver to allow for structural armored shoreline if non-structural work is not feasible. A waterfront property owner could apply to exempt 10% or more of a shoreline project through this waiver process, which is reviewed by Maryland Department of the Environment. Senate Bill 775 incentivizes armored shoreline techniques in areas that may be suitable for living shorelines and removes the ability for the Department to properly review these waiver requests.

Arundel Rivers Federation encourages shorelines with resilient living shorelines when possible, and respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT on SB 775**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation