

To: Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment  
House Committee on Environment and Transportation

Re: In Support of SB 611 and HB 874  
Office of the Attorney General - Environment and Natural Resources Monitoring  
Unit – Establishment

From: Friends of St Clements Bay and St Mary's River Watershed Association

Date: March 6, 2023

Friends of St Clements Bay (FSCB) and St Mary's River Watershed Association (SMRWA) are longstanding community watershed associations working to protect and preserve water quality in the lower Potomac watershed of St. Mary's County Maryland.

We strongly urge you to support the passage of SB611/H874 this session. Maryland has a relatively robust set of water quality regulations in place; enforcement of these provisions is often sadly lacking due to staffing shortages and the absence of a dedicated enforcement unit.

Our local watermen suffer damage from poaching of aquaculture leases to poisoning of their product by sewage spills. Our water clarity in many areas is dismal, a victim of sedimentation often stemming from non-compliant construction sites that operate without effective enforcement of permit requirements.

The health of our communities and economies are tied to healthy waterways. Establishment and funding of a Monitoring Unit will be an important step toward making good on the promise of clean water for future generations.