

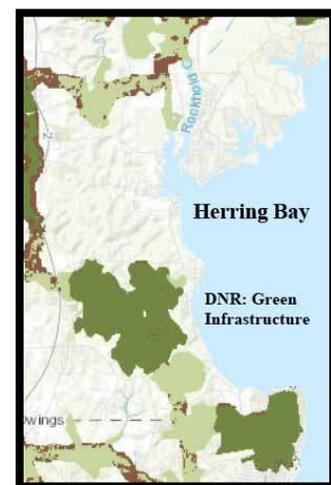
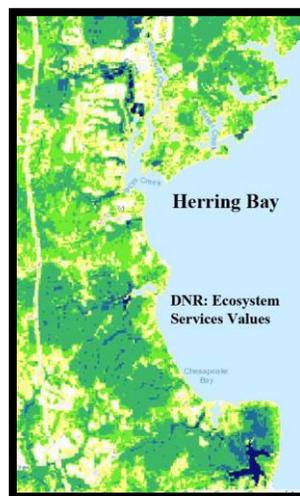
Testimony of the Advocates for Herring Bay¹
 Regarding HB 723: Forest Preservation and Retention
 Submitted by Kathleen Gramp, February 27, 2023
Favorable

The Advocates for Herring Bay strongly support enacting the forestry management reforms in HB 723. The bill offers a fresh approach to valuing Maryland’s forest resources, one that builds on scientific evidence of their role in promoting the resiliency and health of our communities.

Without the reforms in HB 723, the Herring Bay area is at risk of losing forests that provide ecosystem services valued at an average of about \$2,000 *per acre per year*, according to estimates by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).² The watershed’s 7,000 acres of forest stabilize the area’s steep slopes and wetlands, cleanse streams, nurture wildlife, and mitigate damage to property from flooding. For such reasons, DNR has designated a large portion of the Herring Bay area’s forests as green infrastructure assets, as shown in the maps below.

In addition to broad measures strengthening forestry planning and management, HB 723 includes specific reforms that would aid conservation efforts in our area. For example, the bill would:

- Make certain forests a priority for retention, including those that are suitable for forest interior dwelling species, located in Targeted Ecological Areas, or in wellhead protection areas. Those provisions are especially important for the Herring Bay area since 40 percent of its green infrastructure currently is unprotected.
- Allow smaller properties to participate in certain DNR forest conservation programs. Lowering the eligibility threshold to two acres may lead to better protections for the wetland migration zones in Herring Bay that are rimmed by parcels that are too small to qualify for those incentives under current law. And,
- Apply the Forest Conservation Act to land used for electricity generation facilities, which would ensure that projects being built in Herring Bay and adjacent watersheds will be held to the same standards as other types of development.



¹ The Advocates for Herring Bay, Inc. is a community-based environmental group in Anne Arundel County.
² See DNR, [Accounting for Maryland's Ecosystems](#) and [Greenprint](#). Map values: green = \$900 to \$2,800 per acre per year; blue = \$2,700 to \$3,600 per acre per year.