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House Bill 886 – SUPPORT

House Bill 886 - Environment – CAD Task Force
House Committee on Environment and Transportation
February 23, 2024

My name is Allison Bachmann. My husband and I live in the waterfront community of Orchard Beach in Northern Anne Arundel County. We are minutes from major metropolitan areas but we feel like we live in another time and place. Many of the houses in this community were built as summer homes for city residents to escape the heat and crowds of Baltimore. Almost 100 years later it still has that idyllic vibe. When I came here forty years ago from the Black Hills of South Dakota I wondered how anyone could live without mountains. Before long I couldn't imagine living anywhere but on the water.

House Bill 886, allowing the oversight of an independent CAD task force, one not on the payroll of the MPA, to study the impact of that project on our community must pass. The health of the wild life and residents along the miles of river and tributaries, not to mention the disruption of the peace and beauty that we all enjoy, demands it. I understand the need to "promote the long-term viability of the Port of Baltimore" but surely there are better solutions to deal with the toxic waste of our past ignorance and greed than to dump it on the doorstep of the residents of the beautiful communities downstream.

From our water-view home we can launch our kayaks into Stoney Creek where the kids playing along the shore share the creek with watermen, fishermen, water skiers, jet skiers, motor boats, and sail boats. To the west we can paddle into Nabbs Creek, enjoying the lovely homes along its shores until we reach the shallow headwaters where invariably we see baby crabs and Blue Heron. Sometimes a Bald Eagle soars overhead. To the east we can see the mouth of Stoney Creek where it meets the Patapsco River before it enters the Chesapeake Bay, one system of connected tidal waterways. As we get closer to spring I can hardly wait to get back on the water but in the winter months seeing Canvas Backs, American Coots, and other migrating waterfowl floating together in the creek makes up for the wait. These are the things that we love about living here in our quiet little community. They must be protected before they disappear.

The MPA project just off of the mouth of our creek might disrupt the tranquility of our community *only* for months...or years...but all of the rest of what I describe would be in jeopardy for decades, if not generations, to come. The Confined Aquatic Disposal would not be "confined" in any way. The MPA would have us believe that, uncovered, somehow the toxins and heavy metals of the contaminated dredge material will miraculously remain in the trench they dig in the bottom of the river, in spite of the daily tides, the large tidal surges that take place during every big storm, the hurricanes which pass through with increasing frequency, and the turbidity from the massive cargo and cruise ships passing over it. These dangers will only become worse as the port becomes busier and our climate becomes more volatile.

It is imperative that the task force proposed in House Bill 886 is moved into legislation. It's crucial that the task force has independent science experts, impacted citizens, and watermen in its membership. It's also important that the task force has meaningful bidirectional interactions with impacted communities in North Anne Arundel County and with our legislative representatives.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Allison Bachmann
Orchard Beach, Maryland