



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 1465

Soil Conservation Districts – Small Ponds – Plan Review Fees

Date: March 20, 2024

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **Favorable**

From: Alan Girard

Eastern Shore Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 1465 which authorizes a Soil Conservation District (SCD) to recommend a fee system to cover the cost of reviewing plans for small ponds. The bill would enable a program to be established that pays for the expenses incurred by SCDs administering small pond plan reviews.

SCDs are delegated by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to review designs to construct small ponds. Until recently, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supplied technical review and professional engineering services in some counties to assist SCDs with small pond plan reviews. These SCDs are now absorbing the cost of this service without authority to propose a fee system that would cover a District's plan review expenses.

State law currently limits supervisors of an SCD to recommend a fee system that covers the cost of reviewing grading and sediment control plans. HB 1465 would enable supervisors to also recommend a fee system to cover the cost of reviewing small pond plans, ensuring that Districts are adequately resourced to meet demand for this public service.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on Hb 1465.

For more information, please contact Alan Girard, Eastern Shore Director, at agirard@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.