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Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1101
Standing - Environmental and Natural Resources Protection Proceedings
(Clean Water Justice Act of 2024)

Environment & Transportation
March 1, 2024

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB1101** on behalf of the 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.

House Bill 1101 gives residents and communities harmed by illegal water pollution the ability to enforce state law through the courts – a right that unfortunately was stripped away when the U.S. Supreme Court removed federal, Clean Water Act protections for many of our streams and wetlands. Thankfully, Maryland law still protects these streams and wetlands; however, Maryland currently does not guarantee a right for communities to enforce the law like they were once able to under the Clean Water Act.

Wetlands and smaller streams store stormwater and filter out pollution, protecting our communities from flooding and poor water quality. These aquatic ecosystems are also among the most diverse habitats across the state, providing valuable niches of biodiversity across an increasingly urban landscape. Arundel Rivers and our communities are often on the front lines, monitoring these waterways and activities that threaten them. These communities should have the right to carry their findings forward in a courtroom to enforce existing law.

Finally, it's important to note that this bill does NOT create a right of judicial review of final agency actions, nor does it expand standing beyond that provided by federal courts, nor does it codify more stringent protections for our waterways. It simply restores a right once enjoyed.

For all these reasons, Arundel Rivers respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE REPORT on HB1101**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Johnston".

Matt Johnston

Executive Director

Arundel Rivers Federation