

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chairman, House Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter of Opposition HB 1165 Stream and Watershed Restoration – Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)

Dear Chairman Korman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **HB 1165 Stream and Watershed Restoration – Stream Restoration Contractor Licensing and Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Restoration and Funding (Whole Watershed Act)**. MBIA **opposes** the Act in its current version.

This bill establishes the Stream Restoration Contractors Licensing Board and requires that individuals must be licensed or employed by a licensed entity before performing or soliciting stream restoration services in the State of Maryland. While these measures may enhance the quality of stream restoration work, they will introduce unnecessary costs and delays to building projects.

Our biggest concern with this bill is the potential decrease in competition and choice within our industry. Forcing builders and developers to hire licensed contractors will lead to a reduction in the pool of available professionals, and will raise the cost to hire them. Additionally, the requirement to involve licensed contractors for minor stream restoration tasks could lead to project slowdowns and increased expenses. We believe that there should be a clear threshold that distinguishes stream restoration projects from other types of construction activities like installing a crossing.

While the bill aims to ensure higher standards in stream restoration services, MBIA believes that the associated regulatory burden will outweigh the benefits and ultimately reduce the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of construction projects across our State.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully urges the Committee to give this measure **an unfavorable** report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee