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FAVORABLE

Testimony in Support of HOUSE BILL 886  
Confined Aquatic Disposal Task Force  
Submitted to the House Environment and Transportation Committee  
February 23, 2024

On behalf of the Terrapin Institute and as a concerned citizen I would be most grateful for the Committee's favorable consideration of HB 886. Due to the possible impact to the Chesapeake Bay, a more thorough and objective examination of the use of Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) is essential. Although CAD has been used for dredge spoil in other states, the logic and necessity of using CAD in Maryland is not clearly understood.

Based on the available information, the CAD process is not a delicate, precise, or inexpensive operation and may not be consistent with Maryland's environmental standards. As with other dredge spoil containment methods, such as Poplar Island and James Island (MidBay), CAD is offshore and, for the most part, out of sight and out of mind. CAD and most other dredge spoil projects occur in the public domain with public funds.

The effects of such projects are not limited to the immediate area or jurisdiction. Anyone with an interest in the Chesapeake Bay should be concerned and invited to participate and contribute. Agency outreach efforts and passive open invitations to departmental meetings do not qualify as public engagement or a dedicated Task Force. Mandated and sustained public engagement over the life of these dredging activities should be in the statute.

The Terrapin Institute's interest in dredge spoil containment began with the construction of Poplar Island and the local population of diamondback terrapins. A vast amount of information is available from the various agencies associated with the project. We greatly appreciate the importance of the Maryland Port Administration to the State and its dynamic and complex responsibilities. The role of the agency has expanded significantly beyond the shipping industry and includes environmental and natural resources issues. As such, we believe it is essential for the legislature to secure sustained public engagement and independent expertise in all MPA dredge spoil containment activities. The Committee's favorable review of HB 886 is greatly appreciated.

If I may provide additional information or background materials please let me know.

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