



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 886

Confined Aquatic Disposal Task Force

Date: February 23, 2024

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position:

Favorable

From:

Doug Myers

Maryland Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 886 which establishes a task force to discuss and review the overall concept, viability, and available options associated with confined aquatic disposal (CAD) of maintenance dredged material from state navigation channels. The task force will make a recommendation on whether the Maryland Port Authority (MPA) should pursue the development of a CAD program or prohibit its use in the State. The Task Force will, if appropriate, develop a list of best practices and legislative or other policy recommendations regarding the authorization and implementation of the program.

Currently, CBF participates in several committees convened by MPA to guide all aspects of dredged material management and a structure already exists within those committee structures to bring stakeholder recommendations to a multi-agency Executive Committee that directs MPA. There is the potential for this legislation to be largely duplicative of those efforts.

However, on the issue of Confined Aquatic Disposal, considerable community opposition has been raised related to various aspects of siting, potential environmental impacts, and quality-of-life impacts a CAD program might create. CBF understands the potential lack of capacity for dredged material management within the harbor, especially as the port modernizes with berths for larger vessel types currently under construction. We also understand the concerns of community members about legacy toxic recontamination potential if CAD is not carefully planned and executed. CAD capacity, siting limitations, and community protective measures must be developed now, whether or not that capacity is actually needed in the future, because the timing required to bring a CAD program online will be several years.

Whether it is within the existing Dredged Material Management Program structure or a task force created by this bill, CBF will continue to participate in the development of CAD program parameters that assure equitable community involvement and strong environmental protections.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 886.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@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.