



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

SB 196

Soil Conservation Districts - Small Ponds - Plan Review Fees

Position: Support
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: March 20, 2024
From: Jeremy D. Baker

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** SB 196 as amended. This bill would authorize a soil conservation district to recommend a fee system to cover the cost of reviewing plans for small ponds.

Soil Conservation Districts (SCDs) review and approve certain sediment and erosion control plans, as well as small pond plans. Currently, SCDs are able to enact a fee system to cover the cost and review of the sediment and erosion control plans. Senate Bill 196 would expand this to allow SCDs to enact a fee system to cover the cost of the review of small pond plans as well. Senate Bill 196 would also create a definition of “small pond” that, as amended, streamlines the definition to more consistently track terms used in the Environment Article. Finally, the amended definition of “small pond” would allow a small pond owner to be eligible for funding under MDE’s proposed Private Dam Repair Fund (see HB 245).

Senate Bill 196 would provide Soil Conservation Districts with the economic means to review small pond plans, thereby reducing the environmental risk associated with small pond design, construction, and maintenance. Accordingly, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 196.