



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 581

State Government - Permits, Licenses, and Certificates - Processing
(Transparent Government Act of 2024)

Date: February 13, 2024

To: Health and Government Operations Committee

Position: **Favorable**

From: Matt Stegman
Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 581, The Transparent Government Act of 2024. The legislation directs most departments of State government to create an inventory of and report to the Governor information about the various permitting programs the department administers, including recommendations on how to improve the efficiency of the permitting process. The bill further creates a standing Government Efficiency Commission to report annually on how to make Maryland's permitting processes more transparent and efficient.

CBF knows first hand how challenging it can be for some members of regulated communities to navigate Maryland's permitting processes. For example, CBF works with many individual and small farms to complete their required nutrient management plans and has helped communities navigate the permitting process to install living shoreline projects. A transparent and user-friendly permitting process can also aid in rigorous enforcement. When agencies have to spend less of their regulatory capacity correcting honest mistakes they have more bandwidth to investigate potential serious violations.

For the reasons stated above, **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 581.**

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.