



SB0722
Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration
Testimony before Energy, Education and Environment Committee
Hearing February 18, 2025
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the committee, my name is Julia Lawrence, and I represent the 900+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of SB0722**, and we thank Senator Henson and Senator Augustine for sponsoring this bill.

SB0722 would define “ecological restoration” as an activity undertaken with the goal of recovering, re-establishing, or enhancing a degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystem through:

1. improvements to physical, chemical, or biological characteristics or processes
2. returning natural or historical functions or services
3. protecting or improving resiliency

Ecological restoration involves providing services which revive the natural processes, structures, and biodiversity that characterize healthy ecosystems. These services can include carbon sequestration, water filtration, soil stabilization, and habitat provision for diverse species. [1] Without ecology restoration, the delicate balance of ecosystems would continue to decline with dire results. [2] The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would update any relevant regulation to incorporate the definition of ecological restoration or be consistent with the definition of ecological restoration. This would take effect October 1, 2025.

SB0722 is important because across MDE stakeholder collaboration meetings [3], it was evident that there was an inconsistent understanding of ecological restoration and associated project types. Without a clear definition for ecological restoration across state agencies and with the public, confusion and miscommunication would persist over what projects are being included in ecological restoration permitting processes. **A clear definition of ecological restoration will create consistency and expand permitting authority to MDE for qualifying ecological restoration projects.** [4]

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Julia Lawrence
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Sources and Notes:

[1] [Ecological Restoration: The Incredible Power to Heal Nature – Forestry.com](#)

[2] [Ecology Restoration Techniques & Examples | What is Ecology Restoration? - Lesson | Study.com](#)

[3] MDE conducted a comprehensive study on ecological restoration and stakeholder engagement between October 2022 and February 2024. MDE consulted with Maryland state agencies, federal agencies, local governments, community environmental-based advocacy organizations, non-governmental environmental organizations, and academic representatives through 6 stakeholder meetings. The Department also reached out to 6 mid-Atlantic jurisdictions (including Delaware, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia). [MDE Ecological Restoration Study Report 2024.docx](#)

[4] Ibid.