



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21224

Feb 11, 2025

**To:** Chair Feldman and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland SB 428 Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act**

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of Senate Bill 428. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

Science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss and climate change. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. SB 428 will enable Maryland to slow this habitat loss while investing in natural systems, improved water quality and resiliency protections that the Chesapeake Bay and our tidal coastlines provide for the region's birds and people.

SB 428 is an important step forward in elevating the role of the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers, marshes, farms & communities which make up this iconic landscape. This landscape and "Bayscape" not only supports hundreds of species of birds, but they benefit Maryland's economies by directly supporting industries ranging from fishing & agriculture to tourism, and it supports local economies by investing in the natural climate solutions which buffer our communities from increasing storms and rising tides.

Protecting Maryland's Chesapeake tidal salt marshes is a top priority for Audubon in Maryland. These special marshes are both globally rare AND critically important to Maryland's cultural, economic, geographic and environmental identity. Investing in them will take a multipronged approach and significant collaboration. Federal, state and local government will need to elevate the urgency of the threats that saltmarshes face. Maryland's iconic salt marshes support a support a broad range of livelihoods and economies in Maryland. Protecting these threatened coastal landscapes will require a thoughtful approach to collaboration, bringing together local communities that personify these salt marshes and dedicated conservation partners to speak in an unwavering voice in support of coastal protections. SB 428 helps advance these important considerations for the benefits that the Chesapeake Bay and tidal saltmarshes bring to Maryland's bird habitat, our water quality, and local economies.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown