

Testimony in Support of SB898

Senate Energy, Education, and Environment Committee February 18, 2025, at 1:00 pm
Submitted on the 14th day of February at 12:00 pm.

To Chair Feldman and Committee Members,

My name is John Thacker. I own a home on Island Creek, a tributary of the Choptank River in Talbot County, and I urge a favorable report on SB898.

SB898, The Nearshore Farming and Finance Act, will serve to lessen excess nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and, over time make Maryland's near shore agricultural lands more resilient against tidal erosion and saltwater intrusion.

This Bill will:

- Increase the buffer to 100ft for application of nutrients to farm fields. This will lessen the load of excess nutrients into Maryland's waters during and after periods of rain.
- Use existing programs to enhance incentives for landowners that promote the planting of riparian buffers in the 100ft no application zone. This will strengthen shorelines against erosion and help ward off saltwater intrusion.
- Protect the economic interests of tenant farmers.

I **support** this bill because I see the direct impact of excess nutrient runoff when I kayak and boat on Island Creek and the Choptank. Much of the shoreline in these waters is agricultural fields where the corn and soybeans are planted almost right up to the water's edge. Excess nitrogen and phosphorous lead to algae blooms and suppress submerged aquatic vegetation growth. This in turn depletes the waters of oxygen and critical habitat for native fish and blue crabs. SB0898 is a well-crafted bill that smartly addresses my concerns while impacting only a small fraction of Maryland's farmland and alleviating adverse consequences for landowners and tenant farmers.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully ask this committee to give SB898 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
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