



*Wes Moore, Governor*  
*Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor*  
*Josh Kurtz, Secretary*  
*David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary*

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February 19, 2025

**BILL NUMBER: House Bill 878 - First Reader**

**SHORT TITLE: Department of the Environment - Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2025)**

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

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This bill requires MDE to adopt regulations establishing protections for the preservation of vernal pools.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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Vernal pools support some of Maryland's rarest and most endangered plant and wildlife species by providing high-quality habitat and recharging aquifers. Intact vernal pools are increasingly rare in Maryland.

Vernal pools in the United States have been federally protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act since 1972. However, because of the 2023 Supreme Court decision *Sackett vs. EPA*, their protection has been stripped.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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HB 878 requires the Maryland Department of the Environment to adopt regulations to establish protections related to the preservation of vernal pools and to establish protections for buffers around vernal pools.

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