

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB1175— Nutrient Management - Tidal Buffer - Vegetative Buffers
and Restrictions on Fertilizer Application

House Environment and Transportation Committee Hearing:
February, 28 at 1:00pm

To Chair Korman and members of the Committee,

My name is Dirck Bartlett and I live in Talbot County, MD on the Tred Avon River. Thank you for hearing what I have to say. My wife, myself and our two children live on a 30 Acre Farm in Talbot County Maryland. **I wholeheartedly support HB1175, knowing that Talbot county will be the most impacted county by this legislation, and therefore Talbot has the greatest opportunity to restore its local waterways.** I have included a small map showing the farm for your information. We each work in Easton but we have some minor income each year from the following sources:

- We have only 19 acres of farm field and the tenant farmer pays us **\$1,000.00 per year** to basically rent the farm fields. The farmer sells the grain and gets some added income from the government from the planting of winter wheat.
- We also have a Riparian Tree Buffer planted by the State of Maryland in 1998 . This Riparian Tree Buffer was planted for free but generates no income.
- We have a 25' State Required Shoreline Buffer – No Agriculture is allowed in this 25 Foot Buffer.
- We have a 35' CRP Tree Buffer along the waterfront and we obtain payments from the Federal/State Government each year and this amount is **\$980.00 per year** for 3.4 Acres of Shoreline Tree Buffer.
- Therefore, we do not farm the fields within 60' of the shoreline along the river.

Since we purchased the property in 1998, we wanted to improve the river water quality. Having lived there for 27 years, we have noticed huge improvements to the water quality. Here are some of the observations we have had:

- No longer does sediment filled water enter the creek during a heavy rain.
- With 60 feet of trees and bushes along the shoreline, water from farm field rain runoff is filtered through the trees and vegetation and sediments no longer make it into the river
- We have noticed small juvenile oysters on the beach each year for the first time in years.
- We have a healthy population of small cherrystone clams that were never present years ago
- We have underwater SAV (Bay grasses) that are growing in our creek for the first time since the 1970's.
- We have a healthy population of fish (perch, rock, croaker and even fresh water bass). Crabs are abundant each year.

- The water is generally clear except during the summer months when algae tends to muddy the water clarity.

In conclusion, we have seen first hand the benefits of shoreline buffers and we are pleased to see this legislation come forward. Keeping nitrogen out of the Bay is a worthy goal and we believe this is an important effort. The best part of this legislation is to offer both the landowner and farmer some compensation for the trade off of not applying fertilizer on sensitive areas. This legislation is truly a Win Win Win initiative:

- The landowner gets some added income for putting his or her property in tree buffers thanks to this Nearshore legislation.
- The tenant farmer gets some added income advantages in addition to the crop sale and winter wheat income. **\$150/acre** from the new legislation.
- The Bay gets protected and that benefits everyone, including even watermen who rely on the health of the Bay.

Thank you for your efforts to protect the Bay and keep it a healthy estuary. This is a fine resource we all share and Marylanders are very concerned with the health of the Bay. **I urge the committee to give HB1175 a favorable report.**

Thank you – Dirck Bartlett – Easton, Maryland

- 36 ACRES PROPERTY
- 19 CULTIVATED ACRES (Corn or Soybeans)
- Crop Rental = \$1000/yr. (Farmer pays Rent)
- CRP tree buffer = \$980/yr. - (35' tree buffer)
- Riparian tree buffer = \$0.00/yr

