

HB0506_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

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TESTIMONY ON HB#0506 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of/ HB#/0506, Chesapeake Bay Legacy Act

This bill facilitates accomplishment of the goals of [Senate Bill 320 \(Bay Restoration Fund\)](#) which was signed into law on May 26, 2004. The Chesapeake Bay has experienced a decline in water quality due to over enrichment of nutrients (mainly phosphorus and nitrogen). Farming is part of the problem that is affecting water quality.

The Chesapeake Bay is intrinsic to life in Maryland. It is part of our state identity, local culture, and a vibrant part of Maryland's history and State pride. ¹ For both current and future generations we must do all we can to protect this vital part of our state.

This bill will establish the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program.

Soil health has a direct connection to improved water quality. Healthy soils result in less sediment and nutrients being carried into lakes, rivers, and streams, which benefits the aquatic environment and drinking water quality. Healthy soil also retains more water and nutrients, which can lead to improved yields and crop resiliency. ²

The United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Research Service has documented why we should focus on *Reducing the Impact of Farming on Water Quality* ³ This bill recognizes the problem and creates solutions for Maryland.

It will accomplish this goal by establishing the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) Program Fund to support actions associated with fulfilling the Program's purpose.

¹ <https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/TMDL/TMDLImplementation/Pages/what-is-the-bay.aspx#:~:text=Maryland's%20National%20Treasure&text=It%20provides%20its%20inhabitants%20with,generatio ns%20of%20Marylanders%20to%20enjoy.>

²

https://www.osciaresearch.org/uploads/source/ONFARM/Fact_Sheets/ONFARM_Water_Quality_Factsheet_April28.pdf

³ <https://www.ars.usda.gov/oc/utm/reducing-the-impact-of-farming-on-water-quality/>

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The bill will also alter the definition of "healthy soils" for purposes of the Maryland Healthy Soils Program. It will assist in preservation of the fishing industry in Maryland through exempting certain holders of certain fishing licenses from the requirement to obtain a food establishment license from the Maryland Department of Health. Finally, the bill will document our progress in these areas by establishing the Water Quality Monitoring Program to measure success or failure in achieving the program's objectives.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0506.