

THOMAS S. HUTCHINSON  
*Legislative District 37B*  
Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot,  
and Wicomico Counties

Health and Government Operations  
Committee

*Subcommittees*

Public Health and  
Minority Health Disparities

Health Occupations and  
Long-Term Care



The Maryland House of Delegates  
6 Bladen Street, Room 308  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3582 · 301-858-3582  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3582  
Tom.Hutchinson@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony**

**HB1023- Environment – Wetlands – Landward Boundaries**

**w/Amendment 893327/1**

**Economic Matters Committee**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2025**

**HB 1023 - Environment - Wetlands - Landward Boundaries** mandates any tidal wetland converted into non-tidal land, or "fastland," after a shoreline restoration, must be properly surveyed and recorded. Additionally, it requires the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to update the landward boundaries of relevant wetlands maps accurately following the completion of any shoreline stabilization improvements.

**Why is the bill needed?**

Under Maryland law, the state owns tidal wetlands. When a shoreline restoration project is completed, some tidal wetlands are transformed into "fastland," a usable strip of land at the edge of the shoreline. The state continues to claim ownership of this strip of property. However, the precise size, shape, and location of this fastland are currently unknown and undefined because MDE does not record its location. Deeds to waterfront properties typically state that property lines run "to the shoreline." If the state retains ownership, the deed descriptions need to reflect the location of the state-owned fastland.

With **HB 1023**, property owners would be required to show bearings and distances along the existing Mean High Water on the Site Plan to identify and record the location of the fastland. The shoreline restoration applicant already needs a survey to prepare the Site Plans, so this would be a minor additional requirement. Regarding MDE's requirement to update the wetland maps, the applicant would need to provide digital files to MDE upon project completion. These digital files contain all the horizontal and vertical data necessary to load into the GIS program for publishing on the Internet. This process is currently being done at the local level with record plats.

**I respectfully ask the Committee for a favorable vote on HB1023 with Amendment**