

March 24, 2025

To: MD Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment

Subject: **SB 722 (HB1155)** Department of the Environment - Definition of Ecological Restoration

Dear Committee Members,

I ask you to **VOTE NO on SB 722 (HB1155)** – “Definition of Ecological Restoration” because it does NOT, in fact, define “ecological restoration” at all.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act, or Clean Water Act (CWA), is our bedrock law that protects our waterways. It clearly states: *“The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the **chemical, physical, and biological integrity** of the Nation’s waters.”* (emphasis added).

Merriam Webster dictionary defines “ecology” as *“1- a branch of science concerned with the **interrelationship of organisms and their environments**”* (emphasis added).”

The proposed bill does not meet the intent of the CWA or the definition of ecological restoration to benefit organisms. Instead, it promotes **abiotic engineering** “improvements” marketed by the stream restoration industry such as “floodplain reconnection” and “legacy sediment removal” that may or may not result in actual biological uplift.

The bill proposes activities for restoration so broadly defined that they could end up causing more harm than good. Specifically:

1- *“improvements to physical, chemical, or biological characteristics or processes;”* This activity fails the objective of the CWA which is to restore physical, chemical, **and** biological integrity, meaning **ALL three metrics, not just one.**

2- *“returning natural or historical functions or services;”* This activity allows stream channeling, impoundments, deforestation and legacy sediment removal without any ecological uplift.

3- *“protecting or improving resiliency.”* This activity has no apparent meaning.

Most Marylanders want to actually improve every aspect of our waters. This bill fails to deliver. Please vote NO.

Thank you for your consideration.

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