



**Committee: Environment and Transportation**

**Bill: Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

**Hearing Date: February 26, 2025**

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) is writing to express our support for HB1155, Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration which codifies the definition of “ecological restoration” per the recommendation of the Ecological Restoration Permitting Study Report submitted to the General Assembly last year. HB1155 provides a needed definition for the term and will ensure consistency and clarity across regulations which can help to accelerate the permitting and implementation of much-needed restoration projects on the ground.

ESLC is the largest private land trust in Maryland. While we are widely known for our conservation easement work, we also work directly with private landowners, local governments and community organizations on a wide variety of ecological restoration projects. The need is great. As our region grapples with development pressures and the threat of sea level rise, accelerating ecological restoration projects will be essential for sustaining the Eastern Shore’s economic vitality and quality of life.

Advancing conservation is not only a commitment to ecosystem resiliency but a strategic economic choice. Restoration projects are not only environmental investments but powerful economic drivers. These efforts create jobs, stimulate local economies, and generate sustainable, long-term benefits. A recent report on the natural resource economy of the Eastern Shore of Maryland reports that 2.9 billion in direct economic activity of economic activity can be attributed to the natural resources of the Shore. Protecting the Shore that sustains us literally keeps us in business.

Policies and regulations that help to advance ecological restoration efforts are worthy of support and we request a favorable report on HB1155.

Respectfully submitted,

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

