



Date: March 24, 2025

Bill: SB 722 - Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration

Position: Support

Dear Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

The National Aquarium respectfully requests a favorable report for **SB 722**, which will define “ecological restoration” as an activity undertaken with the goal of recovering, re-establishing, or enhancing a degraded, damaged or destroyed ecosystem through specified measures, and require the Department of the Environment to update its regulations to incorporate or be consistent with this definition. We appreciate the committee passing its companion bill, **HB 1155**, through the House earlier this Session.

One of the National Aquarium’s three overarching conservation goals is to save wildlife and habitats. We work with communities and partners on restoration efforts in several areas around the state and throughout our Chesapeake Bay watershed. In 2024, we completed and opened a free outdoor floating wetland exhibit between the piers of the National Aquarium campus on Baltimore’s Inner Harbor, allowing visitors to experience diverse native flora and fauna in an innovative re-created salt marsh. The exhibit reestablishes wetland habitat and function to a post-industrial harbor and is one example of ecological restoration in action.

Establishing in statute a definition of Ecological Restoration will clarify a shared understanding among agencies, local government partners, non-governmental organizations and the public that ecological restoration and natural climate solutions are valuable and necessary approaches to help the state meet our climate, habitat and water quality goals. An established definition will contribute to ongoing collaboration and help leverage additional public and private resources to fund, permit and implement ecological restoration projects that lead to healthier and more resilient watersheds for people and wildlife.

We urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 722 without further amendment.

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