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March 24, 2025

SUPPORT: SB722 - Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration

Chair Korman and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV supports Senate Bill 722 and we thank this committee for advancing Delegate Stein's companion bill, HB 1155 through the House of Delegates.

Incorporating a definition of ecological restoration into statute that can be used and understood across our State agencies was the first recommendation in the Maryland Department of the Environment's Ecological Restoration Study Report (2024)¹. Doing so will eliminate confusion across agencies and with the public as to what projects are and are not included in ecological restoration permits.

This simple act of advancing a single definition will support essential ecological restoration projects across our state providing clarity, especially for permitting. Having this definition in place will support the advancement of the natural climate solutions called for in our state's Climate Implementation Plan. It will help to more rapidly address habitat loss in Maryland and expand efforts to restore vital ecosystems, like the salt marshes along our coasts, threatened by sea level rise.

Maryland LCV supports incorporating the definition of ecological restoration as written in SB722 and we urge the committee to advance this legislation without the incorporation of any additional amendments.

¹ Available online:

https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/water/WetlandsandWaterways/Documents/Restoration/MDE_Ecological%20Restoration%20Study%20Report_8.6.2024.pdf