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Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**SPONSOR TESTIMONY TO
House Environment & Transportation Committee**

**Senate Bill 722
Department of the Environment - Ecological Restoration
(Cross filed with HB1155 - Delegate Dana Stein)**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Byce and Committee Members

Good Afternoon.

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Helson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD. Serving as co-sponsor with Senator Augustine for SB 722- Department of the Environment – Ecological Restoration. We appreciate the opportunity to introduce and present information about this bill.

The origins of SB0722 and HB1155 evolved from legislation adopted in 2022 and a report to the Maryland General Assembly recommending that for clarification purposes – that a definition for Ecological Restoration be established. As stated in the report, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and its supporting advocates recognized that an inconsistency of terminology and lack of understanding exists about the intent of the environmental work to be pursued through the ecological restoration process.

Addressing this need, this bill proposes to define the term “ecological restoration” as an activity undertaken with the goal of recovering, re–establishing, or enhancing a degraded, damaged, or destroyed ecosystem through specified measures, which include: 1) making improvements to physical, chemical, or biological characteristics or processes; (2) return to the natural or historical functions or services; and (3) protecting or improving the resiliency of the area. It requires the Department of the Environment to update its regulations, as appropriate, to incorporate the definition of ecological restoration or be consistent with the definition of ecological restoration.

After reviewing the written testimony of others supporting this bill, and we urge that you give a favorable report to SB 722.