



St. Mary's Soil Conservation District

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February 6, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Senate
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Re: Senate Bill 368, Calvert and St. Mary's Counties – Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting testimony in favor of the referenced bill submitted by Senators Bailey and Harris. This legislation would improve the process by which citizens of Calvert and St. Mary's Counties apply for shoreline stabilization methods. Under current law, a property owner is required to install a living shoreline or request a waiver to install a structural stabilization project. The Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) has mapped the shorelines in Maryland and has produced a map that specifically shows tidal shorelines that would support living shoreline stabilization methods. All other shorelines were listed as undetermined. The undetermined classification does not mean that a living shoreline would not work, but that the vetch, water depth, the direction the shoreline faces and other factors increase the likelihood of potential failure of the structure. For a private property owner, it is unreasonable to expect they would pay to install something that does not have the potential for long term protection and would require extensive maintenance and repair. The process to request a waiver through the Maryland Department of the Environment is lengthy and potentially very costly.

Soil Conservation Districts (SCD's) are independent units of State Government and have been the local technical expert on erosion issues for over 80 years. SCD's initially worked solely with agriculture but our roles have expanded considerably with urban erosion and sediment control and storm water management. In St. Mary's County, I personally have been involved in the design, construction inspection and as-built certification of all types of shoreline projects, from living shorelines to revetments and off-shore breakwater structures. Shoreline erosion protection and stabilization is a natural progression in our soil conservation and water quality technical assistance mission.

Thank you for consideration of this important issue and the St. Mary's Board of Supervisors support a favorable report on Senate Bill 368.

Sincerely,

Bruce A. Young
District Manager