



## **Senate Bill 686 PFAS Chemicals – Product Phase Outs and Registration Requirements Written Testimony**

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**Information**

Submitted to: Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

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### **This legislation and the Chesapeake Bay Trust**

The Chesapeake Bay Trust, a community-based, nonprofit grant-making organization established by the Maryland General Assembly, is named in this legislation as a consulting entity for the Maryland PFAS Chemicals Protection and Remediation Fund (the Fund). The Trust can provide quick, efficient, and cost-effective support in this role. Given our longstanding grantmaking in support of clean and healthy waters, ecological restoration, and scientific research, the Trust is well positioned to support the Fund’s implementation and to advance efforts to prevent and remediate PFAS contamination across Maryland’s communities and watersheds.

### Background:

The Trust recognizes PFAS are persistent, bioaccumulative chemicals that resist breakdown and accumulate in water, soils, fish, wildlife and human tissues. These “forever chemicals” are increasingly detected in Maryland’s stormwater, tributaries, and shoreline environments. Their presence undermines long-term restoration investments and poses risks to public and ecosystem health.

At the Trust, we pool our own funds with more than 40 public and private partners to support grant programs that advance restoration and community engagement. These investments improve local water quality through on-the-ground efforts such as planting trees and installing stormwater management projects, measurably reducing nutrient and sediment pollution while actively engaging community members in the solution. However, the benefits of these investments can be compromised when toxic contaminants like PFAS persist in the environment. Reducing PFAS inputs at the source strengthens the effectiveness of restoration efforts.

SB 686 facilitates upstream prevention and education for manufacturers and consumers, while complementing broader efforts to improve environmental and health outcomes. The Chesapeake Bay Trust stands ready to support the Department on this issue

The Trust already issues grants for work in this arena: Many of the grants awarded by the Trust currently provide funds to local communities to conduct watershed planning and restoration, community engagement and education, efforts to support healthy ecosystems including humans and wildlife, and research for pollutants of emerging concern.

### About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Trust was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1985 as a nonprofit grant-making organization with a goal to empower community-based groups to play a role in the restoration of the state's local rivers, streams, parks, and other natural resources in diverse communities across the state, from the mountains of Western Maryland and the Youghiogheny watershed to the marshes of the Coastal Bays. The goal was to create an entity that complements state agency work by empowering groups on the ground: schools, nonprofit organizations, faith-based and reach large institutions, homeowners associations, community and civic associations, and other types of groups.

The Trust is known for its efficiency, putting more than 90 cents of every dollar into programs. The Trust has awarded close to \$200M through 13,000 grants and projects in every county in Maryland. We now average about 500 grants and other awards a year and have about 1,000 active awardees at any one time.

The Trust does not receive a direct state appropriation to support its operations, instead supported through revenue from the Chesapeake Bay vehicle license plate; half of the Chesapeake and Endangered Species Fund checkoff on the state income tax form; two new donation options through Maryland's online boating, fishing, hunting license system, one that focuses on veterans' rehabilitation; partnerships with federal, state, local agencies, family foundations, and corporate foundations; and individual donors.

Due to its efficiency, the Trust has been rated with the maximum four-star rating by the nation's leading charity evaluator, Charity Navigator, for more than two decades, putting it in the top 1% of nonprofits in the nation.

One of the Trust's basic tenets in its strategic plan is to engage under-engaged audiences in natural resources issues. Every individual in our area benefits from healthy natural resources, and in turn, every individual can help natural resources.

