



Maryland Farm Bureau

3358 Davidsonville Road | Davidsonville, MD 21035
410-922-3426 | www.mdfarmbureau.com

March 31, 2026

To: Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

From: Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.

RE: **Support of HB613 Department of the Environment - Waivers for Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures - Regulations and Scoring System**

On behalf of the over 7,000 member families of the Maryland Farm Bureau, I submit written testimony in support of HB613 Department of the Environment - Waivers for Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures - Regulations and Scoring System. The Maryland Farm Bureau appreciates the General Assembly's efforts to improve clarity, transparency, and consistency in the shoreline stabilization permitting process through House Bill 613, as amended. We support the bill's amended approach to apply its framework on a statewide basis, which promotes uniformity and predictability for landowners across Maryland while avoiding fragmented or county-specific regulatory structures.

Maryland Farm Bureau particularly supports the bill's emphasis on local implementation and decision-making, including the expanded and clearly defined role of local Soil Conservation Districts in the review, evaluation, and waiver processes related to shoreline stabilization projects. Local Soil Conservation Districts possess site-specific knowledge, technical expertise, and long-standing working relationships with landowners, making them well-positioned to assess feasibility, environmental conditions, and practical constraints on a case-by-case basis.

We strongly support policies that rely on locally informed, science-based recommendations rather than rigid, one-size-fits-all mandates, and believe the bill's reliance on Soil Conservation District involvement reflects this important principle. Additionally, the bill includes provisions that enhance procedural transparency, including clearer waiver criteria, defined review processes, and improved coordination among state and local agencies.

House Bill 613, as amended, appropriately maintains flexibility for property owners by preserving waiver options where living shorelines or nonstructural shoreline stabilization measures are not feasible, while still advancing environmental objectives. Maryland Farm Bureau continues to emphasize that environmental policies should be implemented in a manner that is practical, predictable, and respectful of private property rights, particularly where working lands, farms, and rural properties are affected.

For these reasons, Maryland Farm Bureau supports House Bill 613, as amended.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Hough', with a horizontal line above it.

Tyler Hough
Director of Government Relations

Please contact Tyler Hough at though@marylandfb.org with any questions