

I am writing in support of Maryland Senate Bill 688, "Environment - Stream and Floodplain Restoration Projects - Requirements and Limitations,"

In the summer of 2020, my wife and I were informed of an upcoming stream restoration project, known as the Lake Elkhorn Project, adjacent to our property and a locally popular wooded stream trail. Thus began several years of struggle to protect the woods and stream from unnecessary destruction. After we formed a group with other local concerned residents, we managed to halt the project, but for myself and others it took a great deal of time and energy. As a self-employed individual, this also came with a financial cost to my business.

Initially the corporations pushing the project justified it by stating that the project would generate millions of dollars of mitigation credits for development use downstream. Later it was claimed it would reduce pollutants to the Chesapeake Bay, but official water quality reports showed nitrogen levels to be normal and phosphorus levels to be elevated only during storm events. It was claimed it would prevent sediment winding up in the bay. However, two man-made dams prevented any settlement from reaching the Bay. In other words, the motive for this project was financial and not environmental.

Through my opposition to the project, I learned and documented a lot about upland, wooded stream restoration practices, the main takeaway being that they seldom work, nor have they the promised effect. Generally, they are unmonitored after completion and after just a couple of years or so, they begin to fall apart, resulting in more sediment release. The replanted vegetation shown in "after restoration" photos is soon overrun by invasive plants, die of harsh climatic conditions, or is browsed by deer.

Out-of-stream controls of stormwater, i.e. best practices, are the only methods that can permanently control pollutants and sediment. Mechanical in-stream channel engineering is a temporary and unproven solution.

Passage of SB 688 would hinder corporations from taking advantage of an under-informed public, and may prevent other Marylanders from having to have unnecessary and destructive "stream restoration" projects similar to the LEP in their neighborhoods.

In the event you are interested in my comments to MDE and USACE in regards to the Lake Elkhorn Project back in January of 2022, I have provided a link below. A reading of these comments will further explain my support for SB 688.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cl/fi/ckit1mkzno4qxx8sdercr/Comments-to-USACE-MDE-Final-01-07-22.pdf?rlkey=7kdgy5hjthmlx0ibq0iie9mfg&st=58j1sfx8&dl=0>

Please protect our streams and save our precious upland woods and forests and vote in favor of SB 688.