

Testimony in Support of SB688

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for SB688. This bill takes a thoughtful, practical approach to how Maryland restores streams and manages stormwater—something communities across the state care deeply about.

At its core, SB688 simply asks us to start with the least-damaging, most effective tools first. It prioritizes capturing stormwater at the source, protecting intact forests and floodplains, and using upland practices before turning to heavy in-stream construction. The bill itself notes the importance of “minimizing disturbance to existing streams, floodplains, and forests,” which reflects what residents, scientists, and local governments have been saying for years.

I also appreciate how the bill strengthens transparency and accountability. Requiring an alternatives analysis, clear community presentations, and five years of monitoring ensures that projects deliver real ecological benefits—not just modeled numbers. And by focusing on measurable functional lift, including improvements to biological conditions, the bill helps ensure that restoration actually restores.

SB688 doesn't block needed projects. Instead, it makes sure we're choosing the right interventions for the right reasons—especially when public safety or infrastructure is at stake. It encourages solutions that protect habitat, reduce erosion, and make our watersheds more resilient to climate impacts.

This is a balanced, science-based update to Maryland's restoration framework. It protects communities, strengthens environmental outcomes, and ensures that public dollars support projects that truly work. I respectfully urge a favorable report.