

February 27, 2026

SB688. Environment— Stream and Floodplain Restoration Projects – Requirements and Limitations

Testimony by Winnie Carpenter, on behalf of Oella-Catonsville Flood Solutions

WE SUPPORT SB688, in particular:

SECTION 1(4-203) (D) (2) MINIMIZE DISTURBANCE TO EXISTING STREA, FLOODPLAINS, AND RIPARIAN AND UPLAND FORESTS.

A forest buffer waiver was granted for a redevelopment in the floodplain, in Baltimore County. The use of a “forest bank” in another watershed was utilized. Removed forest buffer within the floodplain should be restored and remain in its original watershed to preserve natural water flow and ecological balance.

SECTION 1(4-203) (E) (1) EXCEPT AS AUTHORIZED UNDER TITLE 18 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT APPROVE THE USE OF A STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT THAT INVOLVES IN-STREAM CONSTRUCTION USING HEAVY EQUIPMENT TO MECHANICALLY ALTER THE DIMENSIONS, PATTERN, OR PROFILE OF A STREAM, INCLUDING ACTIVITIES THAT RELOCATE CHANNEL ALIGNMENT, REGRADE STREAM BANKS, OR CHANGE STREAMBED ELEVATION THROUGH EXCAVATION OR FILLING.

**A project was designed to address the historic, and continuing, flooding along Cooper Branch in Catonsville, Baltimore County. (See exhibit 1)
Heavy equipment was involved in the stream restoration project in 2019. (See exhibit 2 & 3)
Cooper Branch flooding occurred again in 2020, 2024 and 2025 as it did in 2018, closing Frederick Road in two locations. (See exhibit 5)
Cooper Branch flooding continues to erode Trolley Trail #9, after the project, was completed, causing the trail to erode and sediment to flow downstream to the Patapsco River. (See exhibit 4)**

SECTION 1(18-102) (c) (7) WHETHER PROJECT COMMUNITY NOTIFICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS WERE COMPLETE AND CONSISTENT WITH THE TECHNICAL MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT, AND

SECTION 1(18-102) (c) (8) ANY OTHER FACTORS THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDERS RELEVANT.

Individual home/property owners, and their communities, are impacted by projects near their neighborhoods. They should be involved in development decisions since these projects influence the safety, enjoyment, and overall well-being of their families, as well as the economic value of their home/property.