

RE: OPPOSE SB 688 – Environment – Stream and Floodplain Restoration Projects – Requirements and Limitations

2/27/26

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

My name is Alexi Boado and I am a **watershed ecologist, former watershed manager for Washington DC DOEE** and longtime Maryland resident who cares deeply about the health of our local streams, groundwater, drinking water, and the Chesapeake Bay. I am writing to respectfully **oppose SB 688**.

I support strong environmental protections and science-based solutions to reduce pollution and restore degraded waterways. Regrettably, SB 688 would move Maryland in the opposite direction.

This bill would sharply limit the tools that local governments, nonprofits, and restoration professionals rely on to fix damaged streams, reduce flooding, and meet long-standing clean water obligations and federal requirements.

The controversy created around stream restoration is being pushed by few individuals who don't understand the suite of tools required by jurisdictions to meet sediment reductions goals. The same controversy could be directed at wet ponds, dry ponds, underground detention facilities, street tree boxes and the massive industries that support them. None of them are perfect. They all require maintenance, monitoring, reengineering, perfecting.

- **In many developed and urban areas, upland stormwater controls alone are not enough or they simply do not exist at a reasonable cost. Please stop and consider that statement.**
- Streams have already been deeply altered by decades of runoff, nutrient pollution, erosion, and legacy sediment. Carefully designed stream and floodplain restoration projects are often the only practical way to stabilize channels, reconnect floodplains, slow floodwaters, improve groundwater recharge, and protect nearby homes, roads, and businesses. **By broadly restricting in-stream restoration and disqualifying it from credit toward MS4 permits, TMDLs, and mitigation requirements, SB 688 would make it much harder to address flooding risks that already threaten private property, public infrastructure and human health.**
- **The bill ignores Maryland's own recent work to improve restoration outcomes.** The Maryland Department of the Environment's 2024 Ecological Restoration Permitting Study recommended better standards, monitoring, and accountability—

not sweeping statutory prohibitions. SB 688 replaces a flexible, science-driven approach with rigid limits that fail to reflect real-world conditions and local needs.

For all of these reasons, I implore you to give SB 688 an **UNFAVORABLE** report. Maryland should continue refining and improving restoration practices—not eliminating essential tools that reduce flooding, protect property, safeguard drinking water and private wells and human health, support local jobs, and restore the Chesapeake Bay.

Don't limit the tools available to MS4 permittees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alexi', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alexi Sanchez de Boado

Hyattsville MD 20782 (PG County)