



March 31, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Re: House Bill 613 – Department of the Environment - Waivers for Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures - Regulations and Scoring System

Position: **Support**

Chair Feldman & Committee Members:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts (MASCD) I am writing to express our support for **House Bill 613 – Department of the Environment - Waivers for Living Shorelines and Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Measures - Regulations and Scoring System**. MASCD, incorporated in 1956, promotes practical and effective soil, water, and natural resource related programs to all Marylanders. Through individual conservation districts MASCD provides leadership, education, cooperation, and local direction, on a voluntary basis.

Senate Bill 613 directs the Department of the Environment to administer waiver authority through regulations that include a transparent scoring system grounded in ecological and coastal-engineering principles. Requiring a clear, criteria-based waiver process that will ensure that decisions are consistent across cases, defensible, and focused on objective measures of feasibility incorporated with local knowledge. This is sound policy for the Chesapeake Bay, for property owners, and for our local Soil Conservation Districts that must help landowners navigate these requirements.

House Bill 613 is a thoughtful, balanced refinement of Maryland's shoreline policy. It preserves the strong statutory preference for living shorelines and elevates the technical and practical expertise of local Soil Conservation Districts. For these reasons we respectfully request a **favorable** committee report. Thank you for your kind consideration and attention to this legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Nelson, Executive Director
Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts