

2/27/2026

SB0688



Ocean City, Maryland Chamber of Commerce

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TESTIMONY OFFERED ON BEHALF OF THE GREATER OCEAN CITY MARYLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

IN OPPOSITION TO:

**SB0688 – Environment – Stream and Floodplain Restoration Projects –
Requirements and Limitations**

Before:

**Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
Hearing: 3/3/2026 at 1:00 PM**

SB0688 requires the Department of the Environment to prioritize stormwater management practices that capture runoff at or near its source to promote infiltration and delay its release into streams, and to minimize disturbance to existing streams, floodplains, and surrounding forests. It also establishes significant restrictions on using stream restoration projects, which involve physically altering a stream's dimensions or profile with heavy equipment, to satisfy requirements for compensatory mitigation, municipal separate storm sewer system permits, or total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements. Furthermore, any stormwater management plan that includes in-stream construction or mechanical alteration of a stream must first analyze non-stream-disturbing alternatives and demonstrate that these alternatives are infeasible, or that the stream project is necessary to address documented public safety or infrastructure issues that cannot be resolved otherwise. The bill also outlines specific criteria for authorizing stream and floodplain restoration projects, emphasizing the assessment of ecological benefits, community engagement, and the necessity of the project to address documented stream degradation that cannot be resolved by non-stream-disturbing methods, while prioritizing the preservation of intact ecological functions.

The Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 700 regional businesses and job creators, **IS OPPOSED TO HOUSE BILL 0988.**

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SB0688 may impose excessive regulatory burdens on restoration projects, hindering timely implementation. It could also limit local flexibility in addressing unique environmental challenges specific to each region. Stakeholder engagement could be undermined, reducing community involvement in restoration initiatives. The mandated requirements may lead to increased costs, diverting funds from actual restoration efforts. The bill could lead to potential delays in project approvals and exacerbate existing environmental issues. Unfortunately, the focus on strict limitations might overlook innovative and adaptive restoration techniques.

For the above reasons, including the economic and operational impact **SB0688** would have on our small business community, the Greater Ocean City Chamber respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT on SB0688**. Please feel free to contact the Chamber directly on 410-213-0144 should you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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