

**Testimony in OPPOSITION of Senate Bill 688 – Environment – Stream and Floodplain
Restoration Projects – Requirements and Limitations**

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 27, 2026

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

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

My name is Migel Vera Arroyo and I am a 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. Rather than improving environmental outcomes, 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 requirements.

I built my career on the construction of stream and floodplain restorations. I specifically chose this career path instead of college in order to support my family and develop a strong profession in something I believe in. I am proud of the meaningful work that I perform and the functional systems that I build. By limiting when and how stream restoration can be used, the bill would reduce demand for this work, threaten jobs, and shrink a homegrown industry that delivers environmental benefits while supporting local employment, including myself and my family. Maryland has been a leader in stream restoration that many states look to for advanced science and techniques.

I am particularly concerned about how this bill would affect drinking water, private wells, and groundwater availability. Large-scale water users, including data centers, place growing demands on Maryland's aquifers through continuous withdrawals. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Maryland residents rely on private wells as their sole source of drinking water. Stream and floodplain restoration helps slow runoff, increase infiltration, and naturally replenish groundwater supplies. Weakening these restoration tools risks reducing recharge, increasing competition for limited water resources, and making wells more vulnerable to failure or contamination via flooding—costs that fall directly on homeowners.

For all of these reasons, I plead with 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Migel Vera Arroyo