



BILL NO.: **SB 225**

TITLE: Environment – Interjurisdictional Watersheds – Flood Management

SPONSOR: Senator Washington

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **OPPOSE**

DATE: April 2, 2026

Baltimore County **OPPOSES** Senate Bill 225 Environment – Interjurisdictional Watersheds – Flood Management. This legislation designates specific watersheds as interjurisdictional flood hazards for certain planning purposes.

By naming specific watersheds as flood hazard watersheds in Section 5-803, rather than 5-503(c), the bill attempts to legislate a matter that should be managed and evaluated through regulations prepared by subject matter experts within the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE). Furthermore, this legislation skips ahead of MDE’s on-going *Advancing Stormwater Resiliency in Maryland* (A-STORM) effort, specifically the work of the Watershed Studies Technical Advisory Group and Geographic Information Systems Technical Advisory Group. These groups work with MDE staff to prioritize watersheds statewide for new watershed flooding studies.

This bill would grant specific watersheds the highest priority, jumping ahead of all other watersheds in the state, without deference to the data and expertise assembled by MDE in response to 2021 Senate Bill 227 Water Pollution – Stormwater Management Regulations and Watershed Implementation Plans – Review and Update.

Baltimore County Department of Environment Protection and Sustainability (DEPS) is also concerned that development in these watersheds could be shut down until a “comprehensive flood management plan” ---jointly developed with Baltimore City--- is approved by MDE and proposed development is in accordance with that plan. *See* COMAR 26.17.02.07 (“development shall comply with the Flood Hazard Mitigation Act of 1976.” (internal citations omitted))

Without knowing the legal consequences of how this legislation will integrate with existing law and COMAR, there is a strong possibility that development could be prohibited until a flood management plan is approved. Last year’s fiscal note for a nearly identical bill, noted “the [watershed] studies conducted and [flood management] plans developed upon passage of the Flood Hazard Management Act of 1976 have not been updated in decades.” DLS, Fiscal Note, SB 42, p.4 (2025). The bill does not state whether such deficiencies are sufficient to pause or

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shut down development in the watersheds specified in the bill. This is a risk that the County is unable to take.

Ultimately, by naming specific watersheds as flood hazard watersheds, the bill unnecessarily risks confusion before MDE has completed its work to implement more stringent stormwater management standards via A-STORM.

Accordingly, Baltimore County urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report from the House Environment and Transportation Committee on Senate Bill 225.

For more information, contact Kayenda Twesigye, State Legislative Officer of Government Affairs at ktwesigye@baltimorecountymd.gov.