



Patuxent Riverkeeper Center, 17412 Nottingham Road, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

March 9, 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

We support HB-1465. I have been the Riverkeeper for the Patuxent River for 21 years. Over those years I have seen and toured lots of wetlands and streambed restoration projects. Some, in my opinion are well done. Others in my view are a terrible mess. But the point here is that whether these are good or bad projects is largely in the eye of the beholder, and that is one of the reasons we need this Bill passed.

Much like Graffiti on a public building or art inside of a museum, they each strike the viewer in a different way depending on your knowledge, experience, preference and other factors. Likewise, I have seen plenty of graffiti on bridges and on public infrastructure that I thought reflected real artistic talent. Incredible bubble letters, vibrant colors. Yet other observers could look at the exact same stuff, and say that it was just malicious or profane. The point being that we don't all see the same things when viewing these projects!

But there is one feature of all of these projects that is indisputable. The builders behind these projects don't own those resources. They are manipulating public trust resources to which they have no more right than anybody else! To allow these projects to proceed with minimal regulatory oversight, sometimes with public funds and without controlling standards means that those resources have basically been privatized expropriated and converted by those with a financial interest in the outcome.

Today, when you look at a stream bed restoration project, you literally have no way of knowing whether it was an attempt to generate credits, mitigate something someplace else, produce biological uplift or just satisfy the picky people who paid for it--- because there is a real absence of standards or criteria in this booming restoration industry which by the way, has lots of non-profit stakeholders participating in it.

It does not take much imagination to recognize that very few people will want to work on saving or conserving these resources in the future as long as there is a robust marketplace getting paid to

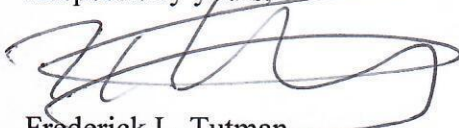
restore them once they have already been ruined. That's unsustainable. We need to make sure these projects are a means toward an end, instead of an end unto themselves? The simple truth is that if we pass these laws that add just a bit of oversight to these restoration projects then we will get better projects overall. That's just plain common sense.

Whether this latest attempt to legislate these projects succeeds or not, the basic conflict between those who want to see as many of these projects as possible, versus those who advocate for prudence and restraint will not go away. It is a cancer eating away at the heart of our environmental community. The opponents raise good and reasonable issues about the failures and misinformation inherent in many of these projects, but the opponents simply lack good answers for the disappearing wildlife, the scoured streambeds, and the ecological damage caused by the worst of these projects that are sometimes undertaken with public funds. It is a brutal aspect of these projects where the proponents for them promote what they see as virtues through their marketing claims, but are dismissive of the complaints raised by those who oppose an industry that seemingly lacks no real boundaries, interpretive standards, or quality control criterion..

Of course, without clear standards there is truly no way to tell the difference between a good or a bad restoration project. Many are no more than free-market business propositions forged from environmental problems.

I urge you to support this timely and important legislation.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Tutman', written over a horizontal line.

Frederick L. Tutman
Riverkeeper/CEO
Patuxent Riverkeeper