

HB1465 - Environment - Stream and Floodplain Restoration Projects - Requirements and Limitations

COMMITTEE - Environment and Transportation

POSITION – Favorable

Hearing Date - March 11, 2026 at 1 PM

Dear Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee:

I am writing to you today as a resident of Takoma Park, Maryland to express my strong support for HB1465. Maryland's stream systems are a major natural asset of the state which support mature trees, water quality, aquatic wildlife and quiet natural places. Attempting to convert them into primarily storm sewers (albeit "dressed up" as streams): 1) doesn't work; 2) unnecessarily degrades Maryland natural resource resilience; and 3) wastes tax-payer dollars. Fortunately, storm water management alternatives which *do* support Maryland stream health exist, and this legislation will facilitate our transition to the use of them.

It is important to note that engineered "stream restoration" projects as currently sanctioned and largely practiced in Maryland are neither effective as stream conservation/restoration measures nor storm water management measures. Rather than stream "restoration," these projects should more accurately be called "stream channel destruction and bank armoring". Invariably, mature trees are removed to allow access by heavy equipment, and natural complex aquatic communities are permanently destroyed as streambeds are excavated and replaced with new material. Notably, the replanting of saplings to replace mature tree stands, often touted as making the tree losses okay, has been shown to be ineffective. Young trees need to grow in the context of mature trees and require a range of in-place natural services to survive. Experience has shown that in the context of the aftermath of an engineered "stream restoration", most saplings lack these resources and die soon after planting (within 5-10 years). Even if they do survive, it will take decades for the saplings to deliver the ecological services once supplied by the razed mature trees. (I am pretty sure our Maryland bird life cannot wait that long in the context of rapid deforestation in the State). This highly engineered and destructive "restoration" approach also costs a lot of money in return for these very poor results. Along with upfront costs, armoring along streams invariably requires expensive repair over time as rainfall intensity and run-off increases. There is too little public transparency around these natural asset losses, costs, and the projects generally. And perhaps because these projects are so lucrative to industry, they are taking place at a rapid pace. We need better state policy to

stop this needless stream ecosystem destruction ...and waste of increasingly valuable public dollars.

There is in fact a far more effective alternative to stream re-engineering: upland storm water and run-off reduction through agreement with upland landowners along stream channels. Well-designed run-off reduction measures include installation of porous pavers, tree conservation and strategic vegetation plantings. Science has shown that simply slowing run-off rates to streams in this way will allow the streams to repair themselves biologically, chemically and physically. (Indeed, they alone appear to be equipped to do it right.) This approach requires respectful and strategic negotiation with private/public landowners and incentives, more so than heavy machinery. The fact is, as storm water run-off rates continue to increase, we will ultimately require this transition to get the underlying storm water management job done. The only question is how much irreparable loss to a major natural asset of the state happens in the meantime.

I am in favor of HB1465 because it will incentivize this transition to low-tech, longer lasting approaches to reducing storm water run-off, and assure that this inevitable work happens in time to prevent irreparable loss to Maryland's critical stands of mature trees along stream systems, and complex natural streambed ecological communities. The bill also improves public communication around needs and proposed measures to protect our beloved streams in Maryland. I urge the committee to issue a favorable report on HB1465 to prioritize environmentally sound infrastructure solutions. Let's not wait to get started until we incur more permanent losses to Maryland natural assets. Though it requires more attention up front, in both the short and the long run, this approach will pay off as it will require less repair and erosion control.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Submitted on 2/27/2026 by:

Allegra Cangelosi

7410 Cedar Avenue

Takoma Park, Maryland 20912

202-557-6536

allegracangelosi@gmail.com