



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 250  
Environment – Water Resources and Wetlands – Enforcement**

January 30, 2026

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT HB250** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection organization on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. *Our mission is to protect Maryland's Eastern Shore waterways through **science-based advocacy, restoration, education, and engagement.***

We are encouraged to see Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) bring this bill forward under the shared principle that effective environmental protection depends not only on strong laws, but on meaningful enforcement. And this bill directly reinforces that foundation.

HB250 will provide MDE with clearer, more effective administrative enforcement tools for violations related to water use and wetlands construction and development. The bill ensures accountability for environmental harm by authorizing penalties that consider environmental damage, human health impacts, and patterns of repeat violations. It directs penalties back into a fund that can be used for water quality monitoring, restoration and other pollution controls. And it promotes timely compliance rather than prolonged environmental damage.

ShoreRivers supports this bill because it reinforces the principle that **polluters should bear the cost of harm, not our local communities.** We know through our work of identify pollution sources, documenting impacts through monitoring, and advocating for swift corrective actions, that when violations are left unaddressed, or without meaningful consequence, they induce prolonged damage to the environment that requires costly repairs. Administrative enforcement, as authorized through this bill, allows MDE to act more efficiently at addressing violations before they cause lasting harm.

We also know that through years of environmental enforcement that supplemental environmental projects (SEPs) are critical for addressing the pollution impacts within those communities that are harmed the most. And by directing penalties into the Maryland Clean Water Fund, HB250 ensures that enforcement actions directly support communities and activities best aimed at addressing the environmental harm that was caused by the violation. **For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB250.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Pluta".

**Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper** on behalf of:

**ShoreRivers**

Scott Budden, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper