

Marlene Durholz
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RE: Favorable position on HB0701 Water Resources - Protection of Vernal Pools (Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2026)

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee Members:

I am writing to ask that the committee provide a favorable report on HB0701, Vernal Pool Wetlands Protection Act of 2026. I appreciate the leadership of Delegate Hill and her colleagues Delegates Lehman, Wu and Terrasa in sponsoring this legislation

Many vernal pools do not meet the current MDE wetland or federal Clean Water Act protection criteria although several Mid Atlantic and New England states have implemented legal protections or certification programs to preserve them. HB0701 will designate vernal pools as named wetlands in MDE regulations, and along with a 100 foot buffer zone, protect amphibian habitat. HB0701 also requires MDE prepare a plan for notifying the public of the location of vernal pools and other wetlands.

I believe notifying the public of the location of vernal pools and other wetlands will bring the needed attention to this essential, unique, seasonally transient wetland ecosystem. Until volunteering at the Patapsco Heritage Greenway, I did not understand the importance of vernal pools.

I urge a Favorable HB0701 committee report and House of Delegates floor vote.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation.

Marlene Durholz
Hanover, MD