

DATE: April 2, 2026

BILL NO.: Senate Bill 225

TITLE: Environment - Interjurisdictional Watersheds - Flood Management

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Letter of Opposition

Description of Bill:

Senate Bill 225 would designate the watershed, headwater, and tributaries of the Carroll Creek, Gwynns Falls, Jones Falls, and Herring Run watershed areas as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds. Development in interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds is required to not increase the downstream discharge of water and must comply with flood management plans approved by the Department of the Environment.

Background and Analysis:

COMAR states that interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds can be identified by the Department of the Environment based on period review of factors like expected upstream development, frequency of flooding, or threat to life in the area¹. Areas that have been designated as interjurisdictional flood hazard watersheds will have local flood management plans attached to them. Relevant factors to housing production that these plans include are management techniques like stormwater mitigation fees and zoning policies. It is often expensive, or not feasible, to build in these areas due to the additional local requirements.

In regulation, watersheds are comprised of the watershed itself and its tributaries. However, in SB 225, this has been expanded to also include the headwaters of these watersheds. By the inclusion of headwaters, the definition of an interjurisdictional flood hazard watershed has expanded to encompass a much larger portion of the State than before. The headwater of a watershed area would capture its point of origin, in addition to its tributaries. DHCD supports efforts to protect Maryland communities from flooding, but we do not believe that this bill will have an appreciable effect. What will come from this legislation will be de facto moratoria on housing production, exacerbating the housing crisis, and leading more Marylanders to leave the state due to the stratospheric cost of housing. Unnecessarily expanding the definition of an interjurisdictional flood hazard watershed only makes it more difficult to develop the housing that Marylanders will need, with extremely limited flood protections gained.

DHCD Position

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development respectfully requests an **unfavorable** report on Senate Bill 225.

¹ [26.17.02.06C | Library of Maryland Regulations](#)