

TESTIMONY FOR HB0295
“Water Pollution-Stormwater Management
Regulations and Watershed Implementation Plans-Review and Update”

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Organization: The Montgomery Countryside Alliance
Submitting: Joyce Bailey, Education Committee Chair
Position: FAVORABLE
Hearing Date: January 21, 2021

The Montgomery Countryside Alliance supports HB0295

The Montgomery Countryside Alliance was founded to promote sound economic, land-use and transportation policies that preserve the natural environment, open spaces and rural lands in Montgomery County’s Agricultural Reserve for the benefit of all Washington Metropolitan area residents.

The bill will increase community resilience and mitigate urban and coastal flooding and water pollution impacts by adapting Maryland’s stormwater design standards to increased precipitation due to climate change and by imposing climate-smart criteria on private-sector development to help the state meet pollution load requirements by 2025.

Maryland’s efforts to protect local waters and communities from pollution and restore the Chesapeake Bay are based on outdated assumptions about precipitation and ignore the very real impacts of climate change. State and local regulators currently are using outdated rainfall data in their permits and modelling. In order for state and local regulators to adequately address the identified threats from increased precipitation and flooding, Maryland must update its stormwater standards.

This bill addresses the impacts of climate change by: 1) requiring regular updates to Maryland’s outdated technical design standards for stormwater and erosion control practices; and 2) ensuring that the last round of water pollution permit renewals address increased stormwater pollution attributable to climate-driven precipitation before the 2025 Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) deadline.

In addition to protecting public safety and water quality through the proper design and operation of stormwater management facilities, the bill also will implement a channel protection strategy to reduce downstream erosion in receiving streams and implement water quantity control strategies to prevent increases in the frequency and magnitude of out-of-bank flooding from large, less frequent storm events.

For these reasons we urge a favorable vote for HB0295.