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January 29th, 2020

Support with sponsor amendments HB78 / SB172: Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

Thanks to the efforts of this committee, The Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) is a critical component of restoring Maryland's waterways and our cherished Chesapeake Bay; a globally important natural estuary and Maryland's cultural, environmental, and economic jewel. The programs and upgrades made possible by this vital fund are some of the most substantial reasons Maryland has made such measurable strides towards restoring the Bay.

There is still a considerable amount of work that Maryland must plan and execute by 2025 to fulfill our obligation of restoring the Bay. Much of the effort to restore the Bay in the past was focused solely on pollution reduction. However, climate change is a reality of our modern age. We need to acknowledge that stronger storms and the sheer volume of stormwater rushing across our land will increase into the future. These strong storms and flooding events present new challenges for both managing and reducing urban stormwater. We need to make sure that our polluted runoff reduction methods are built in a way that can withstand these stronger storms and also help make Maryland more resilient.

However, it is also appropriate to ensure that the Bay Restoration Fund remains firmly tied to reducing the pollution in order to restore the Bay. This bill should be amended to ensure that all projects will still address pollution reduction. We hope this bill will allow Maryland Department of the Environment to prioritize more green infrastructure practices that provide the co-benefits of climate resiliency and flood mitigation. With the sponsor amendments, we hope this bill would allow for some money that is already being set aside for the urban stormwater component of the larger BRF be used in a way that tackles flood control and resiliency issues as well as pollution.

In order to overcome the challenges that climate change brings to the Bay and our beloved state, we need to find innovative solutions and make sure projects are resilient as well as efficient at reducing polluted runoff. For all these reasons, **Maryland LCV supports this bill with sponsor amendments.**

Respectfully,
Benjamin Alexandro

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben Alexandro".

Water Program Director
Maryland League of Conservation Voters