



Testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 1128: Environment – Water Quality Certifications - (Water Quality Certification Improvement Act)

February 28, 2019

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB1128 - Water Quality Certifications (Water Quality Certification Improvement Act) - on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with 3,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

HB1128 will improve Maryland's process for reviewing and deciding upon projects that trigger the need for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification. This review requires that the state to assess the risks to water quality presented by proposed projects, and ensure that Marylanders' right to swimmable and fishable waters are protected.

The Eastern Shore is currently facing serious threats from proposed pipeline infrastructure and the downstream impacts from what flows through the Conowingo Dam. While these projects are federally licensed, they impact the health of the State's waterways tremendously. The 401 Water Quality Certification is one of the State's most enforceable ways to adequately protect its waterways. If the State chooses to waive their right to conduct a full water quality review – as is permissible under current law, our land and water resources will experience irreversible damage that will have a lasting impact on the economy and quality of life on the Eastern Shore. It is unacceptable that the State is attempting to waive its right to issue a 401 Water Quality Certification for the operation of Conowingo Dam.

ShoreRivers believes that it's our responsibility as a community led by our state leaders to ensure that the State uses every resource at its disposal to properly protect its waterways and provide a transparent and fair process. For these reasons and the health of our waterways, **ShoreRivers urges the committee for a favorable report on House Bill 1128.**

Sincerely,
Zack Kelleher
Sassafras Riverkeeper
on behalf of:

ShoreRivers

Jeff Horstman, Executive Director
Tim Trumbauer, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper
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