



Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary

February 24, 2021

The Honorable Guy Guzzone
Chair, Budget and Taxation Committee
3 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Letter of Information – Senate Bill 618 – Natural Resources – State Lakes Protection and Restoration Fund – Mandatory Funding

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources would like to provide the following information for Senate Bill 618. This bill would require the Governor to include in the annual budget bill for the State Lakes Protection and Restoration Funds from \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000.

The existing \$1 million allocation for the State Lake Protection and Restoration Fund has been tremendously successful and instrumental in protecting and restoring Maryland's 16 state-owned lakes, most notably Deep Creek Lake. As Maryland's largest lake and the economic driver for western Maryland, it is critical to fund projects that help protect and preserve one of our most treasured resources as well as all Maryland owned lakes.

However, almost all of Maryland's state lakes are 50 years old or older and are typically filled with nutrient enriched sediments that become colonized by native and non-native submerged aquatic vegetation and begin to experience more abundant algae and sometimes even harmful algae blooms. Key types of projects to address these issues often involve removing sediment and treating contaminated sediments. These "dredging" projects can cost millions of dollars. An increase in allocation could allow funding of these expensive yet necessary dredging projects.

If the annual appropriation for the State Lakes Protection and Restoration Fund increases from \$1 million to \$3 million, it would potentially triple the number of protection and restoration projects. The management and implementation of an annual program of \$3 million will require funding for three staff. If the funding for these positions cannot be taken out of the \$3 million annual allocation for the fund, then additional general funds would be needed to sustain the necessary level of project management and implementation of projects.

Respectfully submitted,

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