



House Bill 1313- Environment- Exception to Nonstructural Shoreline Stabilization Requirements

Position: Favorable

Maryland REALTORS® represents 30,000 Realtor members across the state and advocates for private property owners rights. For Maryland waterfront owners entrusted with riparian rights and a myriad of shoreline requirements, we have seen an increase in regulations over the last several years and believe HB1313 will help develop better practices by utilizing the professional expertise in protecting and stabilizing our shorelines.

According to the Department of Natural Resources, living shorelines are the result of applying erosion control measures that include a suite of techniques which can be used to minimize coastal erosion and maintain coastal process. The various techniques are used to protect, restore, enhance or create natural shoreline habitat. In 2008, the Living Shorelines Protections Act was passed and within it, regulations for waterfront property owners to abide by as stewards. Some highlights from the legislation included erosion control projects that now would be considered a type of "home improvement" and licensed home improvement contractors, marine contractors, builders, tree experts, landscaping firms, and others can lose their licenses for Critical Area violations.

Allowing property owners to utilize these expert and licensed services to help protect both the property owners interest and to best protect the shoreline is a vital step in planning these types of costly projects. While a waiver process is listed as part of the regulatory structure, it is our understanding it is *rarely* used and HB1313 will allow more flexibility for property owners. Creating a waiver exception allows the property owner, with the guidance of a professional who could lose their license over a violation, will help develop a better shoreline plan for the property while keeping the health and environment of the local waterways at the forefront for the long-term strategy.

For these reasons, the REALTORS® request a favorable report.

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