



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor
Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 2, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, Suite 2W
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 221 – Department of the Environment – Enforcement Authority

Dear Chair Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed SB 221- *Department of the Environment – Enforcement Authority*. The Department would like to provide information on the current bill.

The proposed changes to various sections of the Environment Article under SB 221 would provide MDE with additional tools to secure compliance with Maryland's environmental laws and regulations. Specifically, SB 221 amends the following sections of the Environment Article: the Waterway Construction and Dam Safety statute (Environment Article Title 5, Subtitle 5); the Nontidal Wetlands Protection Act (Environment Article Title 5, Subtitle 9); the Drinking Water statute (Environment Article Title 9, Subtitle 4); the Maryland Water Quality Laboratory Certification Act (Environment Article Title 9, Subtitle 10); the Maryland Waterworks and Waste Systems Operators Act (Environment Article Title 12); and the Maryland Tidal Wetlands Act (Environment Article Title 16).

Although SB 221 would provide additional enforcement tools for MDE, the Department has never wavered in our commitment to compliance, which continues to be a priority. The Department's focus is on protecting public health and keeping our communities clean and safe utilizing a balanced and common-sense approach. MDE collaborates with the regulated community to ensure their operations are in conformance with all statutory and permitting requirements. The Department will continue to take aggressive enforcement actions and seek stiff penalties, when warranted, in order to hold polluters accountable. MDE is committed to changing Maryland for the better by protecting and restoring our environment while providing businesses with clear expectations and a level playing field among the regulated entities.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor SB 221 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott".

Tyler Abbott

cc: Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration