

Advocates for Herring Bay



March 21, 2011

Senator Edward Reilly
James Senate Office Building
Room 321
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Delegate Robert Costa
House Office Building
Room 159
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Senator Reilly and Delegate Costa,

The Governor's budget (SB85/HB70), as introduced, protected environmental funds including the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund and Program Open Space. Recent proposals by the Department of Legislative Services, however, would result in draconian cuts to both programs. Their recommendations would take the dedicated funding for both programs and permanently put it back into the general fund. They then recommend giving back a maximum of only \$25 million a year for the Trust Fund and \$50 million a year for land conservation.

This proposal strikes at the heart of Program Open Space. For more than four decades, the State of Maryland has promised its citizens that funding for land preservation will keep pace with development by dedicating to this program a portion of the real estate transaction fees. Breaking that link would mean a massive cut in funding over time for preserving forests, wetlands, and other natural filtration systems, which is one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce the amount of pollution getting into our waterways and comply with EPA's new regulations on TMDL (total maximum daily loads) for the Chesapeake Bay. Cutting funding now would be imprudent and a severe breach of the public trust.

We know that you have supported land conservation efforts in South County and appreciate the importance of keeping South County rural. Please oppose this change and encourage others to do the same. The investments made by these two programs produce tangible results toward our common goal of restoring the ecological and economic productivity of the Chesapeake Bay. We urge you to give them your unwavering support.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions about our concerns on this matter, please contact Barbara Miller at herringbay@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
David Berry
Sharon Brewer
John Clarke
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Elizabeth Berry
Joe Browder
Lenore Clarke

Michael Brewer
John Brumbaugh
Ramona Couteau

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