

HOUSE BILL 973

M3

8lr0235

By: **Chair, Environmental Matters Committee (By Request – Departmental – Environment)**

Introduced and read first time: February 7, 2008

Assigned to: Environmental Matters

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 18, 2008

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Water Management Administration – Living Shoreline Protection Act of 2008**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring certain erosion protection projects to include certain
4 nonstructural shoreline stabilization measures, with a certain exception;
5 requiring the Department of the Environment, in consultation with the
6 Department of Natural Resources, to adopt certain regulations; requiring
7 certain regulations to include a certain waiver process; and generally relating to
8 the regulation of shore erosion control projects.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Environment
11 Section 16–201
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2007 Replacement Volume and 2007 Supplement)

14 Preamble

15 WHEREAS, The State of Maryland and its people, property, natural resources,
16 and public investments will be significantly impacted by climate change and sea level
17 rise; and

18 WHEREAS, Sea level rise contributes to the erosion of approximately 580 acres
19 of shoreline per year along Maryland’s Chesapeake Bay, Atlantic coastal bays, and
20 Atlantic Ocean coast; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike-out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 WHEREAS, The Maryland Commission on Climate Change has recommended
2 that the State begin to actively address the impacts on the natural environment of
3 shore erosion induced by sea level rise; and

4 WHEREAS, Current shore protection practices used to control shore erosion
5 and protect upland properties range from “hard” techniques such as bulkheads,
6 retaining walls, and riprap, to more “soft” alternatives such as “living shorelines” that
7 combine marsh plantings with sills, groin fields, or breakwaters; and

8 WHEREAS, “Living shorelines” are the preferred method of shore protection as
9 they trap sediment, filter pollution, and provide important aquatic and terrestrial
10 habitat; and

11 WHEREAS, It is the public policy of the State to protect natural habitat and
12 that shoreline protection practices, where necessary, consist of nonstructural “living
13 shoreline” erosion control measures wherever technologically and ecologically
14 appropriate; now, therefore,

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
16 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article - Environment**

18 16–201.

19 (a) A person who is the owner of land bounding on navigable water is
20 entitled to any natural accretion to the person’s land, to reclaim fast land lost by
21 erosion or avulsion during the person’s ownership of the land to the extent of provable
22 existing boundaries. The person may make improvements into the water in front of
23 the land to preserve that person’s access to the navigable water or, **SUBJECT TO**
24 **SUBSECTION (C)**, protect the shore of that person against erosion. After an
25 improvement has been constructed, the improvement is the property of the owner of
26 the land to which the improvement is attached. A right covered in this subtitle does
27 not preclude the owner from developing any other use approved by the Board. The
28 right to reclaim lost fast land relates only to fast land lost after January 1, 1972, and
29 the burden of proof that the loss occurred after this date is on the owner of the land.

30 (b) The rights of any person, as defined in this subtitle, which existed prior
31 to July 1, 1973 in relation to natural accretion of land are deemed to have continued to
32 be in existence subsequent to July 1, 1973 to July 1, 1978.

33 **(C) (1) IMPROVEMENTS TO PROTECT A PERSON’S PROPERTY**
34 **AGAINST EROSION SHALL CONSIST OF NONSTRUCTURAL SHORELINE**
35 **STABILIZATION MEASURES THAT PRESERVE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT,**
36 **SUCH AS MARSH CREATION, EXCEPT IN AREAS WHERE THE PERSON CAN**
37 **DEMONSTRATE TO THE DEPARTMENT’S SATISFACTION THAT SUCH MEASURES**
38 **ARE NOT FEASIBLE, INCLUDING AREAS OF EXCESSIVE EROSION, AREAS SUBJECT**

1 TO HEAVY TIDES, AND AREAS TOO NARROW FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF
2 NONSTRUCTURAL SHORELINE STABILIZATION MEASURES.

3 (2) (I) ~~IN~~ SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPH (II) OF THIS
4 PARAGRAPH, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL
5 RESOURCES, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT
6 THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SUBSECTION.

7 (II) REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT UNDER
8 SUBPARAGRAPH (I) OF THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL INCLUDE A WAIVER PROCESS
9 THAT EXEMPTS A PERSON FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF PARAGRAPH (1) OF
10 THIS SUBSECTION ON A DEMONSTRATION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S
11 SATISFACTION THAT NONSTRUCTURAL SHORELINE STABILIZATION MEASURES
12 ARE NOT FEASIBLE FOR THE PERSON'S PROPERTY.

13 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
14 October 1, 2008.

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.