



# Howard County

## *Internal Memorandum*

---

**Subject:** Testimony on Council Bill No. xxx-2023, an act removing an application fee for credits against the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee

**To:** Brandee Ganz, Chief Administrative Officer

**From:** Lindsay DeMarzo,  
*Lindsay DeMarzo*

**Date:** March 9, 2023

---

### **Summary**

Bill xxx-2023 removes a \$75 application fee for credit against the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee, which is part of our continued effort to make programs more equitable and streamlined.

### **Background**

In 2013, at the creation of the Watershed Protection and Restoration Fee, Howard County implemented a \$75 application fee for anyone applying for a credit against their Watershed Fee. This was done largely to avoid an influx of irrelevant applicants hoping to receive credit without providing appropriate stormwater treatment on site. As it turned out, applicants were more enticed by the one-time reimbursement payment toward the installation of a practice, than the credit alone. Therefore, when they applied and were approved for reimbursement, Howard County automatically awarded them the appropriate credit on their Watershed Fee without an additional application. Moving forward we anticipate receiving credit-only applications from residents participating in the Columbia Association reimbursement program and then applying for Watershed Fee credit with Howard County.

The main reason for removing the \$75 application fee is equity. The application fee is an additional cost burden to residents to merely request a credit. The fee is also an additional burden on staff time in several departments and an additional processing hinderance. Therefore, in an effort continually make our programs more equitable and streamlined, we request the removal of the \$75 application fee for Watershed credits.

### **Fiscal Impact**

We have not collected this fee in the past because of the lack of individual credit applications to date, however we anticipate receiving residential credit-only applications in the next year to which this fee would apply.