

Vernal Pool Protection Act of 2026

HB 701 Delegate Terri Hill
SB 523 Senator Mary Washington



The Problem

- Vernal pools are unique, small ecosystems that support biodiversity including state-endangered tiger salamander
- Vernal pools provide vital ecosystem services such as replenishing groundwater and filtering stormwater
- Vernal pools are seasonal wetlands that are often overlooked and filled or poorly managed, so their protection is a high priority in the draft Maryland State Wildlife Action plan
- Vernal pools are being lost at a rapid rate because they often do not meet current MDE wetlands regulations or qualify for federal protections under the interpreted Clean Water Act

These organizations say Maryland needs to protect vernal pools

The Solution

- Act would protect listed vernal pools and their buffers not currently protected as nontidal wetlands in the State
- Act would designate qualified vernal pools as those supporting amphibian and invertebrate species that require these pools to survive
- Act would leverage existing nontidal wetlands permitting and mitigation programs for cost-effective implementation

Pass this bill to protect vernal pools within Maryland

For more information, please visit vernalpoolpartners.org or contact mark@vernalpoolpartners.org

and visit [USEPA: An Introduction to Mid-Atlantic Seasonal Pools](#)

