

Critical Area Commission

STAFF REPORT

October 28, 2026

APPLICANT:	Wicomico County
PROPOSAL:	Refinement - Critical Area Map Update
JURISDICTION:	Wicomico County
COMMISSION ACTION:	Concurrence with Chair's Determination of Refinement
STAFF RECOMMENDATION:	Approval
STAFF:	Michael Macon
APPLICABLE LAW/ REGULATIONS:	Ch. 119, Acts of 2008, §1—4 COMAR 27.01.11

DISCUSSION

Wicomico County (County) is requesting approval of an update to their Critical Area map. Under Critical Area law and COMAR 27.01.11, each local jurisdiction is required to first update the 1,000-foot Critical Area boundary using the best available information and technologies every twelve years. Subsequent updates will be required every eight years based on the 2024 update to the Critical Area Law.

Updates to the Wicomico County Critical Area maps can be found at the Commission's [website](#).

Updated Critical Area Maps

Commission staff worked with the County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Department of the Environment, and the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) to develop updated Critical Area maps for the County. These draft maps were vetted by the aforementioned agencies and delivered to the County as Summary Draft Maps for local adoption. The update resulted in a 1,411-acre gain and a 591-acre loss, with a net gain of 820 acres in the County's Critical Area. The increase is a result of the natural expansion of tidal influence along tributary streams and mapping errors in the original 1972 maps. As a result, some tidal streams have significant gains on the Critical Area Map.

Legislative Bill No. 2026-10

On September 1, 2026, the County Council approved Legislative Bill No. 2026-10, which updated the County's Critical Area map in accordance with State Law (Ch. 119, Acts of

2008, §1—4) and the Critical Area Commission's mapping regulations (COMAR 27.01.11). This action constituted local adoption of the updated Critical Area map for the County.

RECOMMENDATION

The mapping update was completed in accordance with State Law and COMAR 27.01.11., which requires an update to the Critical Area map and 1,000-foot boundary line. Therefore, Commission staff recommend the Program Committee concur with the Chair's determination that the County mapping update be reviewed as a refinement to the County's Critical Area Program. Furthermore, staff recommend approval of the proposed map update.