



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan
Governor

Boyd Rutherford
Lieutenant Governor

Ben Grumbles
Secretary

February 18, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 539 – Local Governments – Resilience Authorities – Authorization

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed House Bill 539, entitled *Local Governments- Resilience Authorities – Authorization* and we would like to provide a letter of information.

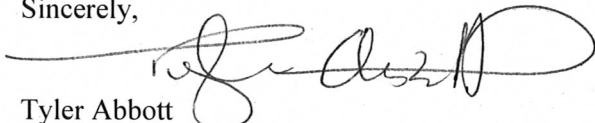
House Bill 539 would add a new title to the Local Government Article: “Title 22. Resiliency Infrastructure.” This proposed legislation authorizes local governments to create a Resilience Authority that provides funding to undertake and support resiliency projects, but places no requirements on local jurisdictions to do so. Although a Resiliency Authority would not have the authority to levy a tax, it would become a subdivision of the incorporating local government with the power to acquire property, handle all aspects of resilience infrastructure, issue bonds, receive grants, collect service fees, and use employees or consultants as needed.

Local Governments already have authority to issue bonds and secure financing for infrastructure projects, but a Resiliency Authority would likely be better prepared to focus on the multi-faceted challenges that relate to climate change resilience projects. Resilience infrastructure in the bill is defined as infrastructure that mitigates the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, nuisance flooding, increased rainfall events, erosion and temperature rise, and would include projects on flood barriers, green spaces, building elevation, and stormwater infrastructure.

This bill aims to assist local government with infrastructure financing to mitigate and manage the risks of climate change, which is in line with MDE’s mission. The Department is always looking to create solutions for climate resiliency and to help mitigate climate change. The financing opportunities set up by the bill may complement or overlap with some of the financing offered by MDE through our Water Quality Financing Administration and help MDE reach its goals.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor House Bill 539 during the Committee’s deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Courtney Watson