



Honorable Gavin Buckley

Office of the Mayor

160 Duke of Gloucester Street

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

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House Bill 539 Resilience Authority – Authorization

Testimony in *SUPPORT*

Thank you for working with local governments to help us in tackling the infrastructure challenges we are dealing with due to climate change and, in Annapolis, sea level rise and ongoing flooding.

Our residents, and visitors to our communities, need to know and have confidence that our infrastructure, not only our homes and businesses, but our sidewalks, streets, bridges, electricity and IT services, can bounce back after a flooding or severe weather event.

This ability to anticipate and bounce back is known as resilience.

House Bill 539, and the Senate's companion legislation SB 457, are supported by Democrats and Republicans. We know that creating resilience is not a partisan issue because when water from the creeks starts rolling over streets and into shops, it doesn't care if you have a D or an R or an I after your name. When floods come, they affect everybody. Annapolis is on the water, so we see this more acutely. It has been a growing problem for a generation.

Let me give you a few statistics on flooding at City Dock Annapolis:

- In 1969, there were about 4 flood days per year
- By 2013, there were 38 flood days per year
- Last year (2019) there were 52 flood days per year
- NOAA anticipates flooding nearly every day of the year by 2065

We are living with climate change now. Flooding is not only more frequent, it is also becoming more intense. The waters rise higher and it takes longer to recede. In Annapolis, it doesn't even have to be raining.

As City leaders in Annapolis know all too well, we have to do something.

To be fair, we do have some tools in our toolbox. We have City tax dollars. We allocate those for ongoing expenses and we put available amounts aside for our capital projects. We have public private partnerships that allow us to tap into private funding sources. We have bonds. For Annapolis, we are now in a stronger financial position, which is reflected in our recent bond rating uptick.

Each of those funding sources individually – and all of those sources collectively – may not be enough to face the serious challenges that climate change brings.

We need to strengthen the tools in our toolbox and that is why we are asking for your help with this enabling legislation.

The City of Annapolis, along with other local governments around the state are seeking the ability to strengthen our financial toolboxes.

A resilience authority is a number of things. To be clear, it is not a taxing authority. What we are asking for is the ability to control our own destinies. We need the ability to purchase land for resilience infrastructure. We need the ability to operate, maintain and regulate that infrastructure to keep our communities safe. We need the ability to charge and collect fees for services, back our bonds and call on the services of intergovernmental agencies in our work.

This is a new area for many governments. Most of the time flooding means closing down a street with a barrier for a few hours and making sure police and fire and other public safety resources are staffed.

We are moving into a new era – one where we have to think big.

We also have to think long term.

Annapolis is a beautiful historic City. It is the seat of state government and the home to important institutions like the State House, the US Naval Academy and the country's third oldest post-secondary institution, St. John's College. It's either going to be around for another couple hundred years with the right infrastructure to maintain commerce and public safety or it's going to be under water.

I thank you for your time and I urge you to vote yes on HB 539.

Gavin Buckley
Mayor of Annapolis