



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Serena McIlwain, Secretary
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary

March 30, 2023

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

Dear Chair Barve:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) is submitting this letter regarding our commitment to the issues raised in *House Bill 1209 Environment – Flood Control – Flood Risk Assessment and Model Ordinance (Climate Ready Floodplain Act of 2023)*.

Per our prior conversations, MDE supports having flood risk maps that depict potential risk during the 1% chance rainfall event. Maryland's flood risk maps are developed for insurance purposes to meet the requirements of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA's flood risk maps are for streams with a drainage area greater than 640 acres and are based on precipitation data and land cover that exists at the time the map is created. However, these maps do not currently incorporate future climate change projections or assumptions on future land use change. There are an estimated 54,000 buildings located in the FEMA floodplain. MDE predicts this number could increase by 69% as climate change impacts Maryland's rainfall patterns, sea level rise, and coastal flooding.

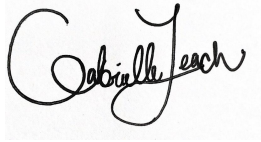
In the interim, the Department is committed to the following:

- Ensuring Maryland's continued participation in the NFIP, including providing assistance to all 147 participating communities;
- Updating the FEMA flood risk maps as FEMA requires for the NFIP. Through this and the efforts to advance stormwater resiliency in Maryland, the Department will continue to work toward solving flooding in Maryland in the face of climate change; and
- Pursue federal funding in order to update our flood risk maps to consider a more holistic approach of climate change impacts beyond the FEMA NFIP requirements.

MDE will keep you and the advocates of HB 1209 informed on MDE's progress on this important issue and will coordinate with the interested parties over the interim on next steps.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at Gabrielle.Leach@maryland.gov if you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabrielle Leach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G".

Gabrielle Leach
Deputy Director
Legislative and Intergovernmental Relations
Maryland Department of the Environment

Cc: The Honorable Mary Lehman
Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration