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Testimony encouraging **SUPPORT of House Bill 1209 – Climate-Ready Floodplain Act of 2023**

Environment and Transportation Committee
March 8, 2023

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB1209**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Communities, residents, and businesses across our watersheds and the entire State of Maryland have become far too familiar with 100-year and 500-year floods – terms that until recently were jargon used by planning departments and floodplain managers. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that there were 151 flooding events in Anne Arundel County between 1996 and 2019, and 1,961 such events across the State of Maryland during the same time period.¹ Each of these events did not meet the 100-year or 500-year flood thresholds, but each event, by definition, inundated properties with flood waters.

In recent years, the State of Maryland and its counties have taken significant strides to better understand our current and future flood risks. Unfortunately, those efforts have demonstrated flood risks outside of the standard FEMA flood maps. In 2021, the State published a Climate-Ready Action Boundary (CRAB) map that shows potential areas of inundation in larger events from riverine and coastal flooding.² In 2016, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) published maps estimating flood risk to State roads. In Anne Arundel County, this assessment indicated that sea level rise would result in approximately 25 percent of roadways being inaccessible during a 100-year flood event in 2050.³

HB 1209 would require the Department to update its floodplain maps to include data such as the data used in these analyses. Further, it would require the Department to update the State Model

¹ Historical Flood Risks and Costs. FEMA. Available at: <https://www.fema.gov/data-visualization/historical-flood-risk-and-costs>.

² Coast Smart Climate-Ready Action Boundary (CRAB). Available at: <https://mdfloodmaps.net/crab/>.

³ Maryland Adaptation and Vulnerability Assessment. 2016. State Highway Administration.

Floodplain Ordinance with the latest and greatest floodplain management techniques to ensure that structures built or rebuilt in areas at risk of flooding are designed in such a way to eliminate or minimize flood damage.

These new maps and Model Floodplain Ordinance will substantially improve each community's flood-preparedness.

For all of these reasons, **Arundel Rivers urges a FAVORABLE report on HB1209.**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Johnston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Sincerely,

Matt Johnston
Executive Director
Arundel Rivers Federation