



LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HB 245

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT - FEES, PENALTIES, FUNDING, AND REGULATION

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 28, 2024

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo.) Emergency Managers Affiliate **SUPPORTS HB 245 - Department of Environment - Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation**. This bill establishes a Private Dam Repair Fund and Loan Program to provide a dedicated funding source for owners of private dams that have been classified as high hazard or significant hazard dams by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE).

Dams are recognized as a hazard in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan (2021), with their classifications based on the potential downstream damage if the dam were to fail. High and significant hazard dams present considerable risks such as loss of life and flooding for homes, roads, and businesses. Maryland has experienced several dam failures in recent years, and the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan predicts a high likelihood of future damage from dam failures, particularly as climate change leads to more frequent and intense rainfall events.

This legislation aims to establish a framework for the MDE to develop a system that will aid in the reduction of risks associated with high and significant hazard dams. By implementing fees and establishing the Private Dam Repair Fund and Loan Program, this bill will ensure a financial resource for private dams that pose a threat to life and property throughout the state.

It is imperative that proactive measures are taken to address these risks and protect our communities. This legislation provides a clear path forward, ensuring that the necessary resources are available to address the maintenance and repair needs of high-risk dams. By supporting this bill, the State can safeguard lives, property, and infrastructure, and ensure a safer and more resilient future for all Marylanders. Thus, the Emergency Managers Affiliate asks this Committee to give **HB 245** a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Preeti Emrick

Preeti Emrick

MACo EM Affiliate President