



MARYLAND LEAGUE
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

Audubon Maryland-DC

February 18, 2020

SUPPORT HB539: Local Government – Resilience Authorities - Authorization

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

The above organizations strongly support HB539: Local Government – Resilience Authorities – Authorization, and thank Delegate Watson for her leadership on this issue.

With its more than 3000 miles of waterfront and approximately 265,000 acres that are less than 5-feet above sea level, Maryland’s communities are among the most vulnerable in the country to the effects of climate change and sea level rise. Many cities across the state are experiencing record levels of flooding, both from devastating storms and sunny-day flooding. Baltimore City’s nuisance flooding is some of the worst in the country, but they are not alone: Annapolis, Easton, and other towns and other waterfront communities are facing similar challenges.

The General Assembly has made significant strides towards addressing climate change by passing legislation to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and promote clean energy. This year there are several ambitious bills being presented that would make our state a leader in climate legislation. HB539 is one of these important legislative actions. The bill acknowledges that while we must do everything we can to reduce our climate pollution in order to stave off the worsening effects of climate change, our communities also need tools to confront the current climate change challenges they are facing.

By enabling counties and municipalities to create “resilience authorities” that can issue bonds as the funding mechanisms for critical projects, this bill gives our communities the flexibility to address their unique needs to mitigate the effects of climate change. The accountability and transparency considerations required by the annual reports ensure that citizens will be kept fully aware of the efforts taken on their behalf.

We strongly urge a favorable report on this important bill.

Thank you for your consideration.