



January 28, 2021

**Senate Bill 0062**  
**Emergency Management – Chief Resilience Officer – Appointment and Duties**  
**Committee: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Climate change presents a current and future danger to the residents of Anne Arundel County. A 2019 report<sup>1</sup> by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) predicts the City of Annapolis could experience high-tide flooding events every other day by 2050 due to rising sea levels. The Maryland Department of Transportation estimates that many coastal communities within Anne Arundel County could find themselves within regulated floodplains due to sea level rise by 2050 or 2100.<sup>2</sup> And our communities are suffering from more frequent stormwater flooding events caused by stronger storms.

Anne Arundel County is aggressively pursuing funding to mitigate such impacts of climate change and create more resilient communities. Last year the County applied for \$4.1 million in Building Resilience Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and managed by the Maryland Emergency Management Association (MEMA). The Administration thanks MEMA for all the resources it provided to help us navigate the new grant proposal requirements. This \$4.1 million request is only the beginning, and we anticipate much larger requests from ourselves and other Maryland counties in future years as the risks of climate change become ever clearer and the window of opportunity to mitigate those risks becomes ever narrower.

The Administration is also pursuing local legislation and policy changes to create more resilient communities. We will soon submit legislation to the Anne Arundel Council that will create a Resilience Authority, as authorized by last year's bipartisan Senate Bill 457. The Authority will study community-based mitigation options and seek out innovative state, federal and private funding sources to build resilience infrastructure projects. The Administration is also exploring options to update building standards within communities that may be impacted by climate change.

All of these local efforts to mitigate climate impacts would benefit from the creation of a dedicated Chief Resilience Officer within MEMA. Such an officer would present local governments with a single point of contact when seeking assistance to develop local mitigation strategies and pursue funding.

For all these reasons, the Anne Arundel County Administration requests a **FAVORABLE** vote on SB 0062.

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<sup>1</sup> NOAA. 2019. 2019 State of US High Tide Flooding with a 2020 Outlook: NOAA Technical Report NOS CO-OPS 092. Available at: [https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/publications/Techrpt\\_092\\_2019\\_State\\_of\\_US\\_High\\_Tide\\_Flooding\\_with\\_a\\_2020\\_Outlook\\_30June2020.pdf](https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/publications/Techrpt_092_2019_State_of_US_High_Tide_Flooding_with_a_2020_Outlook_30June2020.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Department of Transportation. 2016. GIS Data Products to Support Climate Change Adaptation Planning: Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Available at: <https://www.esrgc.org/documents/resources/reports/GIS%20SLC%20Report%20-%20Anne%20Arundel.pdf>.