

SENATOR SARAH ELFRETH
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Education, Business and Administration

Chair, Pensions

Senate Chair

Joint Committee on Administrative,
Executive, and Legislative Review

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 10, 2021

Testimony in Favor of SB528
Coast Smart Siting and Design Criteria - Private Construction or Reconstruction Projects and Enforcement

Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 528, legislation to extend the Coast Smart Siting and Design Criteria to private construction and reconstruction projects that disturb more than one acre of land are located: in an area designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area by the Federal Emergency Management Agency; within three vertical feet of the 100-year floodplain as mapped and updated; or in an area that, as of 2019, is subject to nuisance flooding.

In 2014 this Committee took action to enact the Coast Smart Council and tasked them with adopting specific siting and design criteria to address impacts associated with sea level rise and coastal flooding. In 2018 this Committee also took action to expand the scope of the Council and added a requirement that projects in which at least 50% of the funding comes from State funds must follow the siting and design criteria established by the Council.

The climate crisis and flooding in our communities has only worsened since the passage of both pieces of legislation. Sea level rise is increasing and coastal flooding events are becoming more extreme - putting our communities and our waterways at increased risk. More specifically, by 2045 there are projected to be 14,000 residential properties at risk of chronic inundation and that number grows to 68,000 residential properties by 2100.

The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science also concluded that “probabilistic sea-level rise projections can and should be used in planning and regulation, [and] infrastructure siting and design.” **Severe rainstorms and flooding will not distinguish between buildings built with public funding or private funding. Rising seas threaten all.** We have an opportunity to do just as the experts recommend by passing this legislation and better preparing for our future.

Once again I respectfully request a favorable report of Senate Bill 528 to ensure that we are building for the future and protecting our communities and homeowners.