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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HOUSE BILL 512

**COAST SMART SITING AND DESIGN CRITERIA – PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION AND
RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

SUPPORT

February 3, 2021

MR. CHAIR, MR. VICE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE,
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT HB 512 EXTENDING COAST SMART SITING AND DESIGN
CRITERIA FOR STATE BUILDINGS AND ROADS TO SPECIFIED PRIVATE CONSTRUCTION OR
REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

WHAT THE BILL DOES: THE BILL EXTENDS A 2014 LAW THAT ESTABLISHED THE COAST SMART COUNCIL,
AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE THAT LATER ISSUED DESIGN AND SITING CRITERIA FOR SHORELINE
DEVELOPMENT. THAT LAW WAS AMENDED IN 2018 TO REQUIRE THAT THE DESIGN AND SITING
STANDARDS BE APPLIED TO PROJECTS IN WHICH THE STATE OF MARYLAND HAS A \$500,000 OR
GREATER INVESTMENT.

THIS BILL EXTENDS THESE CRITERIA FURTHER TO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT IN
SHORELINE AREAS AND AREAS SUBJECT TO NUISANCE FLOODING. IT EXEMPTS SMALL PROJECTS SUCH
AS ADDITIONS OR TEAR DOWNS AND RECONSTRUCTION BY APPLYING IT TO PROJECTS THAT COST
MORE THAN \$100,000 (ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS) AND DISTURB MORE THAN ONE ACRE OF
LAND. THE SITING AND DESIGN CRITERIA WOULD BE ADDRESSED AS PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW PROCESS THAT OCCURS AT THE COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL LEVEL.

THE PROBLEM THE BILL ADDRESSES: MARYLAND IS ONE OF THREE STATES MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO SEA LEVEL RISE BEHIND FLORIDA AND LOUISIANA. GLOBAL WARMING IS CAUSING SEA LEVEL RISE AND IN MARYLAND IT IS COMPOUNDED BY ALREADY LOW LYING LAND THAT IS SINKING. BY 2050, SEA LEVEL RISE IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY 1.6 FEET. AN ESTIMATED 23,000 PROPERTIES IN MARYLAND ARE AT RISK OF TIDAL FLOODING TODAY AND AS LAND DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES GROW, THAT NUMBER WILL INCREASE UNLESS WE ADOPT COMMON SENSE DESIGN AND SITING CRITERIA FOR PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT ALONG SHORELINES.

MR. CHAIRMAN, WE CANNOT IN GOOD CONSCIENCE LIMIT LAWS ADDRESSING SEA LEVEL RISE TO GOVERNMENT FUNDED PROJECTS ONLY. THOSE PROJECTS MAKE UP JUST A SMALL FRACTION OF DEVELOPMENT. THE VAST MAJORITY OF DEVELOPMENT IS PRIVATE. THIS PROBLEM IS URGENT AND MERITS EXTENDING SITING AND DESIGN CONSIDERATION TO PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT IN AREAS VULNERABLE TO SEA LEVEL RISE AND COASTAL FLOODING. THIS BILL IS NOT AN EFFORT TO THWART OR OTHERWISE STOP DEVELOPMENT; IT IS MEANT TO RESULT IN SMARTER DEVELOPMENT THAT ACKNOWLEDGES THE DEADLY AND DESTRUCTIVE REALITY OF RISING SEA LEVELS AND INCREASED FLOODING.

COASTAL FLOODING IS A MAJOR THREAT TO HUMAN LIFE, PROPERTY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT. THIS THREAT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW WITH THE INCREASING SEVERITY AND FREQUENCY OF STORMS, AS WELL AS A NEWER PHENOMENON, SO CALLED SUNNY DAY FLOODING, BEING EXPERIENCED IN MANY AREAS INCLUDING ANNAPOLIS.

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE BOTH ORAL AND WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 512 FROM THE STATE'S LEADING ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS. THANK YOU AND I URGE A FAVORABLE REPORT.

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