



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 542

Emergency Management - Chief Resilience Officer - Appointment and Duties

Date: February 17, 2021
To: House Health and Government
Operations Committee

Position: **Support**
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Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS** HB 542 as elevating the need for coordinated resilience planning efforts throughout Maryland.

Confronting climate change and improving resiliency supports the Chesapeake Bay's recovery

This bill establishes the position of Chief Resilience Officer within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to coordinate State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Climate change and sea level rise pose resiliency challenges to Maryland. Rising sea levels threaten to inundate miles of Chesapeake shoreline. For the Chesapeake Bay, warmer waters exacerbate the Bay's dead zones, stressing fish and other forms of marine life critical to the Bay's restoration.¹

Building resiliency to sea-level rise will help protect vulnerable populations along the Bay's coast

In low-lying areas throughout Maryland, storm surges combined with higher sea levels and increasingly erratic storm activity may create a "perfect storm" that will flood thousands of acres. Many of those areas are economically disadvantaged, and the combination of flooding and limited access to emergency facilities—facilities that might themselves be flooded—could be disastrous.

Access to federal funding will support Maryland's efforts on climate and the hazards created by climate change

This bill rightfully elevates the importance of resiliency through establishing responsibility for statewide coordination of resiliency efforts for risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Chief Resiliency Officer's success in identifying and securing federal, State, and local funding streams will be critical to Maryland's ability to confront the hazards associated with climate change.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 542.

For more information, contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at rclark@cbf.org or 443.995.8753.

¹ How Climate Change Impacts the Chesapeake Bay, [Climate Change](#), Chesapeake Bay Foundation, last visited 2.12.2021.