



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 630

Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Office of Resilience

Date: February 24, 2022

To: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

Position: **Support**

From: Josh Kurtz, MD Executive Director

Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS** SB 630 as elevating the need for coordinated resilience planning efforts throughout Maryland in the face of climate change and establishing specific roles and responsibilities for how the office works with specific state agencies, local governments and businesses.

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

This bill establishes the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to coordinate State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan, develop risk assessment tools, facilitate grants for resilience and prioritizing equity in resilience efforts.

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 and private 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 an Office of Resilience and requiring the coordination of several available federal, state and private revenue streams. Building resilience will demand resources beyond the State's budget for assessment tools and projects to protect vulnerable communities in the face of rising seas levels and stronger, more frequent storm events.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 630. 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.