



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 552

Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement
(Better Together to Save Our Weather Act of 2022)

Date: February 24, 2022

Position: Support

To: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

From: Doug Myers, Maryland Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 552 which requires counties to develop climate crisis plans addressing climate mitigation and adaptation strategies at the local level, with particular attention to adaptation needs to protect vulnerable communities.

The most effective governmental crisis response is based on an established plan that has been thoughtfully created with input from not only the implementing entity but also those that the plan aims to protect. The same will undoubtedly be true with regard to planning for the environmental crises that will result from climate change and sea level rise.

Climate change symptoms such as torrential rainfall events, heat waves, floods, and tides are occurring with increasing, yet unpredictable frequency. Local governments are not prepared for the eroding shorelines, subsiding farm land, and catastrophic floods that they will face. During these events, those citizens who live in low-lying areas and urban centers often experience greater life safety threats and worse property damage. The climate crisis plan adaptation elements in this bill will identify and prioritize actions to address vulnerable communities and provide options for farmers struggling to make a living on farmland that has become marginal because of saltwater intrusion.

Maryland has set and continues to improve ambitious greenhouse gas emissions reductions which will require implementation at the local level. The climate crisis mitigation components of the plans required by this bill will align local government actions with national and state greenhouse gas reduction goals to take advantage of support funding for these crucial transitions to our infrastructure. The planning required in this legislation provides an opportunity for local government to consider the most cost-effective approach for local mitigation actions.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 552. For more information, please contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at rclark@cbf.org and 443.995.8753.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.