



The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Taylor House Office Building, Room 251

RE: HB 0706 Hearing on February 18, 2022

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members,

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy (ESLC) supports HB 706 and urges a favorable report on the legislation, which establishes the Office of Resilience in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). Creating an Office of Resilience and designating a chief resilience officer who is responsible for coordinating state and local efforts to build resilience within communities across the state will put Maryland in a stronger position to handle future risks, including those which are exacerbated by climate change. The Office of Resilience will also give state and local governments the ability to better secure new funding opportunities aimed at pre-disaster mitigation.

The greatest emergency we face is climate change, which in much of the state is felt most acutely in the form of increased flooding. According to the 2016 Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan, 11 of Maryland's 24 main local jurisdictions were determined to have a "high" risk level for coastal hazards which include tropical storms, hurricanes, Nor-easters, sea level rise and shoreline erosion. ESLC is committed to preserving and sustaining the vibrant communities of the Eastern Shore and the lands and waters that connect them. In preserving working lands and preventing sprawl, we are able to safeguard the natural infrastructure that protects communities from increasingly severe floods. By adopting agricultural best management practices on these lands, we only increase our resilience.

Proactive resilience planning is one of the most effective investments Maryland can make, saving both lives and money. The time is now to bolster MDEM's efforts regarding improving resiliency through increasing capacity, resources and services to the department.

By supporting HB 706, you will help to build a more resilient Maryland and secure our state for future generations. If you have any questions, we are happy to provide support to members of the committee. Please reach out to Sara Ramotnik at sramotnik@eslc.org.

We urge a favorable report on HB 706 and thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S.K. Kline".

Steven K. Kline
President, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy

CC: Delegates Sample-Hughes and Watson

