



Testimony in SUPPORT of HB706– Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Office of Resilience

February 18, 2022

Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB706** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with over 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

This bill establishes the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to coordinate State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan, develop risk assessment tools, and administer the National Flood Insurance Program in coordination with the Department of the Environment.

**HB706 will result in a more coordinated effort to plan for climate change across the state, a necessary action to mitigate and adapt to the impacts associated with the climate crisis.**

Adaptation strategies, including nature-based infrastructure, are critical in minimizing negative impacts from more intense precipitation events, storm surge, and sea level rise. Maryland is the third most prone area in the Country to sea level rise, behind only Florida and Louisiana. Sea level rise, severe storms, flood events, and the damage that they bring are laying bare how necessary it is for us to have more responsible and more resilient planning of future developments. **Our state has seen a total of 394 floods between 2005-2014, and about 81,000 people are at risk of coastal flooding, a number projected to rise by an additional 38,000 people by 2050.** Many of Maryland's coastal communities are socially vulnerable and disproportionately bear the tremendous costs in property damage and disruption of life caused by sea level rise and climate change. A 2019 report from the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy found sea level rise on the Eastern Shore is double the global average of a half foot in the past century<sup>2</sup>. An Office of Resilience within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency will better protect and prepare Maryland residents.

For these reasons stated above, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on HB706.

Sincerely,

Elle Bassett

Miles-Wye Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

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**ShoreRivers**

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

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<sup>1</sup> States at Risk: Maryland. <https://statesatrisk.org/maryland/coastal-flooding>

<sup>2</sup> James Bass; Brandy Espinola and Kristel Sheesley; Jessica Grannis; and Michael Scott (2018). Mainstreaming Sea Level Rise Preparedness in Local Planning and Policy on Maryland's Eastern Shore. A report prepared for the Eastern Shore Climate Adaptation Partnership by Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. [https://arch.umd.edu/sites/default/files/docs/regional-sea-level-rise-study-2019\\_0.pdf](https://arch.umd.edu/sites/default/files/docs/regional-sea-level-rise-study-2019_0.pdf)

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