



Committee: Environment and Transportation

Testimony on: HB706 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Office of Resilience

Organization: Climate Justice Wing of the Maryland Legislative Coalition

Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 18, 2022

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB706. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB706.

HB706 will establish an Office of Resilience in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). The Office will be led by a Chief Resilience Officer who will be responsible for coordinating State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan. Creating this new office will improve Maryland's risk response by fostering a more proactive, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to mitigating and limiting natural disaster and climate change impacts.

As recently reported in the [Washington Post](#) (January 31, 2022), researchers at the University of Bristol, England used data from flood insurance claims, building records, the census, and other sources to forecast how global warming will affect flooding across the United States. They found that losses due to flooding will jump more than 26 percent over the next three decades, and that disadvantaged communities will bear a greater share of the economic burden. The study showed that some Maryland counties, especially those bordering the Chesapeake Bay, are predicted to experience the highest levels of increased flood risk. Maryland is no stranger to increased flooding exacerbated by climate change, as seen in numerous flooding events over the last few years.

While the State has many programs across numerous agencies that improve resilience, increased coordination is needed between each of these programs and local government. Creating an Office of Resilience within MDEM will strongly incorporate emergency management perspectives within those projects and programs.

HB706 will help Maryland become more resilient and better coordinated across state and local government. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.