



Larry Hogan | Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford | Lt. Governor
Russell J. Strickland | Acting Secretary

Letter of Information
HB0706 - Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Office of Resilience

Acting Secretary Russell J. Strickland
Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Hearing Date: 22 February 2022

Chairman Kumar P. Barve
Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Barve,

I write to share information on **House Bill 0706**, which will establish the Office of Resilience and a Chief Resilience Officer within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM). If this bill passes, Maryland will join a growing list of states who have appointed a Chief Resilience Officer or established an Office of Resilience, including our mid-Atlantic neighbors Virginia, the District of Columbia, and New Jersey, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

House Bill 0706 builds on the work being done today to build a more resilient Maryland. This bill identifies MDEM as the coordinating entity for resilience efforts across State government, a role we currently have for disaster risk reduction, preparedness, response, and recovery for all hazards facing the state. Resilience is truly the culmination and connection of those activities across not just State government, but the whole community: residents, businesses, non-profits, academia, and governments at all levels. Resilience, as reflected in this bill, is the whole community working together to minimize risk, decrease impacts, and speed up recovery for our State.



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This bill will establish an Office of Resilience and a Chief Resilience Officer as the central point for coordination of resilience activities across the State government. This will provide a connected forum for the work currently being done by several key State agencies, working groups, councils, and other entities important to cohesive resilience strategy and policymaking. The bill also requires extensive outreach and technical assistance for communities and local government partners, and the prioritization of vulnerable and overburdened communities in Maryland. This aligns with prioritization by the Federal government for critical grant funding opportunities, particularly related to disaster risk reduction. Finally, the synergy required between the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and hazard mitigation process is an important step to prioritizing risk reduction of Maryland's greatest hazards.

As the fiscal note indicates, there are substantial staffing and support costs required to attain the goals and requirements of this ambitious bill. While MDEM is currently supporting resilience work, this bill outlines a number of expanded roles and requirements for MDEM, and appropriate resources are critical to the State's success in achieving the goals and objectives outlined by **HB0706**. We cannot fulfill the requirements in this bill with existing resources.

I appreciate the opportunity to share information regarding this bill. We would be happy to provide you additional information if desired. Please feel free to reach out by email or phone to me, or to MDEM's legislative liaison, Anna Sierra (anna.sierra1@maryland.gov), at any time.

Sincerely,

Russell J. Strickland
Acting Secretary
Maryland Department of Emergency Management