



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## House Bill 706

Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Office of Resilience

Date: February 18, 2022

Position: **Support**

To: Environment and Transportation

From: Josh Kurtz, Maryland Executive Director

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS** HB 706 as elevating the need for coordinated resilience planning efforts throughout Maryland in the face of climate change and establishing specific roles and responsibilities for how the office works with state agencies, local governments, and businesses.

### **Confronting climate change and improving resiliency supports the Chesapeake Bay's recovery**

This bill establishes the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to coordinate State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan, develop risk assessment tools, facilitate grants for resilience and prioritizing equity in resilience efforts.

Climate change and sea level rise pose resiliency challenges to Maryland. Rising sea levels threaten to inundate miles of Chesapeake shoreline. For the Chesapeake Bay, warmer waters exacerbate the Bay's dead zones, stressing fish and other forms of marine life critical to the Bay's restoration.<sup>1</sup>

### **Building resiliency to sea-level rise will help protect vulnerable populations along the Bay's coast**

In low-lying areas throughout Maryland, storm surges combined with higher sea levels and increasingly erratic storm activity may create a “perfect storm” that will flood thousands of acres. Many of those areas are economically disadvantaged, and the combination of flooding and limited access to emergency facilities—facilities that might themselves be flooded—could be disastrous.

### **Access to federal and private funding will support Maryland's efforts on climate and the hazards created by climate change**

This bill rightfully elevates the importance of resiliency through establishing an Office of Resilience and requiring the coordination of several available federal, state, and private revenue streams. Building resilience will demand resources beyond the State's budget for assessment tools and projects to protect vulnerable communities in the face of rising seas levels and stronger, more frequent storm events.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 706.** For more information, contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at [rclark@cbf.org](mailto:rclark@cbf.org) or 443.995.8753.

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<sup>1</sup> How Climate Change Impacts the Chesapeake Bay, [Climate Change](#), Chesapeake Bay Foundation, last visited 2.12.2021.