



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

March 29, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Senate Bill 630 – Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Office of Resilience

Dear Chair Barve and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed SB 630, *Maryland Department of Emergency Management-Office of Resilience*, and would like to provide some information about this legislation.

SB 630 would establish an Office of Resilience in the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and create a new position, Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). The CRO is responsible for coordinating local and state efforts to build resilience to risks identified in Maryland's Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). The CRO's duties include developing a state resilience strategy; assisting local and state agencies in implementing resilience action; and securing private, state, and federal technical and funding assistance. SB 630 requires the appropriate state agencies and entities to coordinate with the Office of Resilience to improve interagency coordination and meet certain goals such as ensuring rapid state support following emergencies; minimizing flooding in residential areas; promoting climate-informed investments; informing and educating the public on emergency safety and risks; building neighborhood resiliency; improving coastal resilience; adapting agricultural practices; and reducing the potential impact of other hazards identified in the HMP.

Flooding hazards can occur from unmanaged stormwater runoff, inadequate stormwater systems, operation or failure of dams, sea level rise, and activity in local and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) designated floodplains. MDE plays a major role in reducing risks to public safety and property damage from flooding in Maryland through regulation, policy development, design standards, permits, inspections, and emergency response. Specifically, MDE ensures that stormwater runoff is managed, dams are maintained, impacts to floodplains are minimized, and assists local communities in managing their floodplains so that they are eligible for federal flood insurance and disaster relief.

Maryland's HMP includes mitigating risks associated with flooding and dam failure emergencies. While MDEM coordinates development of the HMP and distributes funding from FEMA for projects related to hazard mitigation, many of the mitigation actions are decentralized among various state and local agencies with no defined structure of authority or relationships. In some cases, one program's requirements conflict with another. Coordination and integration among these programs requires oversight, communication, cooperation, and action at multiple levels of government and through public/private partnerships.

Thank you for considering the Department's information regarding this legislation. We will continue to monitor SB 630 during the committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Katie Fry Hester
Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration