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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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**Testimony in Support of SB 813 - Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program -
Environmental Justice Funding**

Over the past several years, I have seen how the impacts of climate change and flooding can be devastating to a community. Last summer's storms created several horrific floods in my District that led to millions in property damage, the closure of small businesses, and destruction of countless tree and natural landmarks.

Data collected from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) shows that over the past 20 years, rainfall, flooding and sea level have increased across Maryland, with precipitation growing by 2.63 inches per decade from 2000 to 2020. Precipitation is especially heavy in counties surrounding the Chesapeake Bay. When evaluating precipitation by year, coastal counties were consistently among those with the most precipitation over a 20-year period, according to analysis of data from NOAA. In 2018, Baltimore City had the highest annual precipitation in Maryland over the course of 20 years with 73.84 inches.

To help address the burgeoning issue of flooding in our community, I am sponsoring SB 813 to create an appropriation of \$20,000,000 for the State's comprehensive flood management grant program. This program directs funds to counties and municipalities for flood response and mitigation (75% of the cost is paid for by the State, 25% by the locality).

To ensure the funding is being used equitably, we have drafted an amendment to the bill which requires at least 40% of funding provided under the program to be used for projects located in or directly benefitting census tracts that are "overburdened or underserved."

These communities as defined as having at least 25% of the residents qualify as low income; at least 50% of the residents identify as nonwhite; or at least 15% of the residents have limited English proficiency. Adding these terms make the legislation consistent with the Climate Solutions Now Act passed last year, and this provision helps target funding in communities that have historically been without adequate State support.

This legislation will assist in achieving the State's goal of mitigating the impacts of climate change and creating environmental justice, while also providing much needed support to our local jurisdictions.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 813.