



SB813 – Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program – Environmental Justice Funding

Testimony before

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 23, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Mdm. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB813**, which would require at least 40% of funding provided under the comprehensive flood management grant program to be used for projects in areas with an EJ Score of 0.76 or greater. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Senator Washington in sponsoring this important legislation.

Climate change is the most pressing issue the world must deal with, and Maryland is no exception. It is expected that during the next century, both the average annual amount of precipitation and frequency of heavy downpours will keep rising. This will lead to increased flood threats. I think we all remember the two 1000-year floods that hit Ellicott City within two years and the damage they caused. An increase in flood damage requires the state to act to recover from these events. This bill will increase the amount of money appropriated to the comprehensive flood management grant program from \$2,000,000 to \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2023 and will require this appropriation to continue for years after. This 10 fold increase is necessary due to the increasing impact of climate change on Maryland.

But as is so often stated, it is low-income and minority communities that may be hit the hardest. So, it is necessary that this bill requires that at least 40% of the funding shall be used for projects located in or directly benefiting lands with an EJ Score of 0.76 or greater.

For these reasons, we support SB813.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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