



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

House Bill 147

Environment – Climate Crisis Plan – Requirement

Date: February 8, 2023

Position: Support

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

From: Erik Fisher, AICP, MD Land Use Planner

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) urges a **FAVORABLE** report from the House Environment & Transportation Committee on HB 147. If adopted, this bill would ensure that local jurisdictions across the state have plans in place to reduce the negative effects of climate change and protect infrastructure, services, and environmental features from projected impacts.

Climate change impacts like sea level rise, higher temperatures, and increased precipitation directly impact local infrastructure and waterways. Rising seas can flood marshes, reducing the state's wetland footprint where these features are unable to migrate inland. Warming waters hold less oxygen, requiring proportionally larger reductions in nutrient pollution to achieve water quality standards. Intensifying storms overwhelm stormwater management facilities and accelerate erosion, flushing extra sediment into local creeks and streams. These and other related climate impacts can increase the cost and time that must be invested in the cleanup effort.

Local planning can reduce climate impacts and strengthen the environmental systems that protect us. Coordinated efforts to curb emissions and allow natural infrastructure to adapt can blunt the impacts of climate change and help make communities more resilient. HB 147 provides a framework for local jurisdictions to identify proactive steps, taking into account local conditions, priorities, and assets. Efforts to reduce emissions from transportation and energy generation will ease a direct climate change driver while also cutting nitrogen pollution to local waterways. Habitat assessment and preservation will capture carbon and stabilize natural features like marshes and forests that soak up stormwater and provide a buffer to protect communities against storm tides. And HB 147's inclusion of adaptation strategies will help local officials effectively manage marsh migration, shoreline maintenance, and forest cover as rising sea levels pressure this coastal infrastructure.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 147.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.