



March 9, 2023

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

Re: House Bill 892 - Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program - Funding for Overburdened Communities

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed House Bill 892 and would like to provide the following information and proposed amendments. MDE has been working with the House and Senate sponsors on this legislation and appreciates the consideration of the Department's amendments.

House Bill 892 would require the Governor to include in the annual State budget, an appropriation for the comprehensive flood management grant program of at least \$20,000,000 each fiscal year starting in fiscal year (FY) 2025. Additionally, the bill would require that at least 40% of the funding in each FY (minimum \$8,000,000) be provided under the program be used for projects located in or directly benefiting census tracts with an Environmental Justice (EJ) Score of .76 or greater, as identified using the Maryland EJ Tool.

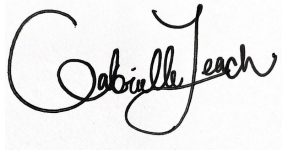
Amendment

Through the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (CSNA), the state has a definition of "overburdened" and "underserved" communities. In order to be consistent across programs, MDE would like to substitute EJ Score and Maryland EJ Tool with overburdened OR underserved within the language. MDE spoke with the sponsor's office and they agreed to the proposed amendments.

These amendments would include striking (e) and (j) on Page 2 and inserting the definitions of overburdened and underserved per CSNA. Additionally on Page 5, strike "OR DIRECTLY BENEFITING CENSUS TRACTS WITH AN EJ SCORE OF .76 OR GREATER, AS IDENTIFIED USING THE MARYLAND EJ TOOL" and insert, "AN OVERBURDENED OR UNDERSERVED AREA."

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor HB 892 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-453-3235 or by e-mail at gabrielle.leach@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabriele Leach". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and 'L'.

Gabriele Leach
Deputy Director, Legislative and Intergovernmental Relations

Cc: The Honorable Julian Ivey