



SB148

Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program - Funding for Underserved and Overburdened Communities

Testimony before Education, Energy, and the Environment

Hearing February 6, 2024, 1:00 pm

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Sen. Feldman, Vice Chair Sen. Kagan, Sponsor Sen. Washington and members of the committee, my name is Elizabeth Fixsen, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today in **support of SB148**, requiring at least 40% of funding provided under the comprehensive flood management grant program to be used for the benefit of underserved or overburdened communities. The bill also requires that the annual state budget include at least \$20,000,000 for the comprehensive flood management grant program in fiscal year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter;

As climate change brings more frequent and severe storms, more and more communities in Maryland and beyond are threatened with flooding. Such flooding often impacts low-income neighborhoods more severely. Baltimore's "Black Butterfly" is one such vulnerable community, lying to the east and the west, separated by a "White L" of primarily white populations in between. These vulnerable areas are less equipped to tackle major flooding events compared to the wealthier "White L" areas outside of the Black Butterfly. While funding to repair flood damage can be accessed from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Association), FEMA's programs face prominent criticism and concerns with inequity in disaster relief and mitigation. From FEMA's own analysis of disaster survivor registrations obtained by NPR, poor renters were 23% less likely to receive help with housing post-disaster.

This bill will help to correct such inequities by ensuring that low-income communities and neighborhoods in Maryland receive an adequate share of flood mitigation and recovery funding.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Elizabeth Fixsen
Savage, MD

Source: ArcGIS Story Maps. Flooding Inequity in Maryland and Beyond.
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/186f3433d2b84b12867842dcc32d087d>