



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB128
Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025**

House - Economic Matters

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

January 23rd, 2025

Dear Honorable Chair Wilson and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of HB128 -Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025**. Some of the most at-risk individuals in terms of climate change are those who reside in flood-prone areas. Funds obtained from the RENEW Act would directly augment the state's budget for the comprehensive flood management program. There are real life consequences of inadequate stormwater management in communities like East Riverdale and Rockville where low-income people have been hurt, displaced, and lost their possessions.

I want to uplift the story of a CASA member, Oscar Rojas. He and his family reside in East Riverdale, MD, a community on the Anacostia River's floodplain. In 2021 and 2022, Oscar, his wife, and 4 year-old daughter experienced two back-to-back years of devastating flooding that destroyed many of their belongings. They were forced to rebuild not once, but twice; they also had to live with the mold infestation that developed in their apartment unit, until Oscar shared his testimony with Secretary McIlwain of MDE who initiated an inspection of his unit and had the county force the property owner to clean the mold and put flood protections in place.

Furthermore, CASA members reside in Rock Creek Wood Apartments in Rockville, MD. This particular complex is notorious for severe flooding. Flooding in this community goes beyond inconvenience as severe flooding in 2021 resulted in a death and 150 tenants displaced¹. Property damages, loss of valuables, and the trauma evoked by these events add to the reasons why communities like Rock Creek need better flood management. Low-income families across the state have more to lose and less wealth to rebuild.

The last point I want to convey on flooding and sea-level rise is that the RENEW Act allocates funds to relocate or elevate Wastewater Treatment Plants. This finer point is based on the fact that treatment plants like the Patapsco Treatment plant in Curtis Bay, which is an overburdened and underserved community, are in locations that will flood in the future, so preventing the environmental and human disaster of these facilities being disrupted is imperative.

Lastly, many CASA members are construction workers, landscapers, and holders of other manual labor outdoor positions. As temperatures rise and more brutal summers come, they will be at extreme risk of

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<https://www.wusa9.com/article/news/local/maryland/rock-creek-woods-apartments-flood-sensor-to-be-installed/65-deea97d8-b39b-4569-a262-078520a6d2b9>



heat-related illness. This bill directly addresses their needs for health care relating to the effects of climate change by directing money to the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities.

We cannot wait for weather to become even more extreme and more people to die or be hurt before making substantial improvements and investments to our infrastructure, response, and readiness. For these reasons, CASA urges a favorable report.

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