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## Testimony in SUPPORT of HB254 – Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act

Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee  
March 31, 2026

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of HB254** on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Deeply rooted in the South, West, and Rhode Rivers, Arundel Rivers Federation heals and protects our waterways and champions clean water across Maryland. Our vision is healthy waterways for all, and we achieve our mission through restoration, education and outreach, and Riverkeeper programs.

The Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act will empower the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to engage local communities more fully in planning and implementing nature-based restoration and climate resilience projects – a critical step toward a more resilient Maryland.

It is vital to include community voices in our resilience planning and project implementation, especially from those that are on the front lines of climate impacts such as coastal flooding, shoreline erosion, and storm surge. This bill will increase community participation in decision making for restoration projects and better ensure that the benefits of resilience investments are shared equitably.

HB254 directs DNR to facilitate more public community engagement, especially from underserved communities and increase funding opportunities for resilience restoration projects. Arundel Rivers has utilized this funding in the past to support communities and shorelines at risk. Specifically, Arundel Rivers recently completed 1,060 linear feet of living shoreline with breakwater and sill features that will mitigate the effects of coastal storms, flooding, and erosion at Franklin Point State Park. This shoreline was losing an average of 7.5 feet of land per year, causing the marshes and forests in the area to disappear and exposing the nearby community of Shady Side to more severe storm impacts. Stabilizing this shoreline and others like it protects both community and ecological resources for current and future generations.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports enhanced community engagement, strategic investment in resilience, and long-term leadership on climate adaptation. We respectfully request a **favorable report** on HB247.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett  
South, West, and Rhode Riverkeeper  
Arundel Rivers Federation