

HB 254: Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act: Please vote to **OPPOSE** this bill.

Dear Education, Energy & the Environment Committee:

I am writing as a concerned resident of Maryland to strongly **oppose HB 254**.

While preparing for natural hazards and environmental challenges is prudent, this bill takes the wrong approach. This bill mandates new websites, guidance documents, training, and long-term actions by 2035, all framed around "inclusive" and "equitable" community engagement.

How would the State guarantee "...**EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION**..."?

The language "...**SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING, THE DEPARTMENT MAY, AT THE DEPARTMENT'S DISCRETION, AUTHORIZE PARTIAL FORGIVENESS OF A LOAN GRANTED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ECOLOGICALLY BASED, PERFORMANCE-BASED, AND EQUITY-BASED CRITERIA DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT...**" is

discriminatory in nature. Why would the State initiate any amount of "loan forgiveness" for this type of project vs. any other State project, especially if "equity" is going to be part of the basis for qualification? This is discriminatory toward participants in other State projects where "loan forgiveness" is not available.

Maryland taxpayers should not be forced to fund another layer of bureaucracy and grant programs that embed divisive equity mandates into environmental policy. True resilience comes from practical, science-based infrastructure improvements, sound land-use decisions, and removing barriers to private investment—not from government-directed "community facilitation" that often favors certain activist groups over others or diverts scarce resources into administrative overhead and ideological programs.

Key concerns with HB 254 include:

- It creates a new dedicated capital grant fund, increasing state spending at a time when Maryland already faces significant budget pressures and competing priorities like education, public safety, and transportation.
- The heavy focus on "inclusive community adaptation" and mandated participation will turn legitimate resilience projects into vehicles for political agendas rather than cost-effective solutions that benefit all residents.
- Adding more mandates, reporting requirements, and DNR-led engagement processes will slow down actual project delivery while raising long-term administrative costs borne by taxpayers.

Maryland would be better served by policies that promote genuine resilience through targeted, transparent, and fiscally responsible measures—without layering on equity-focused bureaucracy that increases costs without guaranteed results.

I respectfully urge you to **oppose HB 254** and any similar legislation that expands government spending and ideological requirements under the banner of climate adaptation.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of my concerns regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

Trudy Tibbals