



🌐 mdem.maryland.gov

☎ 877-636-2872

📍 7229 Parkway Drive, Suite 200 | Hanover, MD 21076

Governor | Wes Moore Lt. Governor | Aruna Miller Secretary | Russell J. Strickland

FAVORABLE - SB 197

Land Use - Comprehensive and General Plans - Alteration of Elements

Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Hearing Date: 21 JAN 2026

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes in support of **SB 197 – Land Use – Comprehensive and General Plans – Alteration of Elements**. The bill seeks to alter the required elements of comprehensive and general plans for counties and jurisdictions, and establish requirements for each element.

The Department of Emergency Management and the Office of Resilience urge support for this legislation that includes resilience as a core planning principle in all local comprehensive plans. In an era of increasing hazard impacts, such as more frequent and intense heat waves, severe storms, and rising sea levels, the need for resilient communities in Maryland has become paramount. Climate change and other hazards pose significant threats to our infrastructure, economy, and public health, and those impacts are already felt across our state. By explicitly incorporating resilience into their planning documents, local governments can create plan of action for these challenges.

SB 197 assists local governments with the necessary tools and information to build communities that are not only durable against physical threats but also socially and environmentally sustainable. By blending these requirements with the **Equity** and **Ecology** elements, this bill ensures that our most overburdened populations are included in future planning processes. Including resilience in the very fabric of local land-use decisions will ensure Maryland's communities are able to thrive in the face of 21st-century challenges.

Failing to address these challenges through proactive planning will leave our communities increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of various hazards. We can help our communities prepare to thrive in the face of these challenges by including resilience as a planning principle in local comprehensive plans.

In conclusion, MDEM urges a favorable report of **SB 197 – Land Use – Comprehensive and General Plans – Alteration of Elements**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: anna.sierra1@maryland.gov.