

# **MDP FAV Written Testimony - HB 254 - Supporting In**

Uploaded by: Andrew Wilson

Position: FAV

**HEARING DATE:** March 31st, 2026

**BILL NO:** HB 254

**COMMITTEE:** Education, Energy, and the Environment

**POSITION:** Support

**FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:** Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

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**TITLE: Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act**

**BILL ANALYSIS:**

HB 254 proposes the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to: 1) facilitate community participation in future project planning and development; 2) establish the Resilience Through Restoration Capital Grant Fund, opening a funding pathway for state agencies, local jurisdictions, and nonprofit organizations to pursue nature-based restoration projects; 3) develop and continuously update various tools, guidance materials, and training resources to aid local jurisdiction planning efforts; and 4) identify climate vulnerabilities on DNR owned lands and evaluate opportunities to implement climate change mitigation, adaptation, or resilience projects, including nature-base solutions and adaptive management, on said lands.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:**

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) supports HB 254. Staff within MDP's Planning Services division provide technical assistance, tools, and guidance materials that promote best planning practices to local jurisdictions and their planning commissions. The resources DNR is tapped to produce in HB 254 would greatly assist MDP staff and local jurisdictions in planning for climate resilient infrastructure, protecting ecological systems, and generally implementing Maryland's Sustainable Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Policy (Growth Policy) under SFPA 5-7A-01 and LUA 1-201. The Growth Policy, as amended via [HB 286/SB 266 of 2025](#), in part, requires local jurisdictions to implement the Resilience and Ecology Planning Principles through their comprehensive plans. These Principles are meant to address the integration of community resiliency measures and the protection and restoration of sensitive ecological systems. The

planning resources DNR will develop under HB 254, coupled with the Resilience Through Restoration Capital Grant Fund, directly complement these Principles by providing local guidance in planning efforts and monetary support in climate resilient infrastructure development. As these planning and development efforts are conducted, HB 254 also requires DNR to facilitate community participation. This facilitation - which directly supports the Equity Planning Principle requiring local jurisdictions to engage all sectors of a community in plan development - is key to the successful implementation of the Growth Policy as it ensures that local goals can be achieved with the input of community members.

**MDP Position**

The Maryland Department of Planning respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 254

# **CROSSFILE Arundel Rivers FAV254\_Inclusive Community Ada**

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



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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

# **HB 254 Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation A**

Uploaded by: Humna Sharif

Position: FAV

**Monday March 31, 2026**

**TO:** Delegate Marc Korman, Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee, and Committee Members

**FROM:** Humna Sharif, Climate Resilience and Adaptation Director, The Nature Conservancy; Cait Kerr, State Policy Manager, The Nature Conservancy,

**POSITION:** Support HB 254 Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports HB 254 offered by the Department of Natural Resources and sponsored by Chair Korman. TNC is a global conservation organization working to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering data-driven, on-the-ground solutions that secure clean water, air, and healthy, secure living environments for our human and natural communities today and in the generations to come.

Climate change poses an existential threat to the natural resources, economy and Maryland's vibrant economies that depend on a healthy living environment. Maryland is already facing extreme climate change impacts in the form of rising sea levels, extreme precipitation, and more frequent heat waves. In 2022, the Climate Solutions Now Act (CSNA) established the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals in the country – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 60% by 2031 and obtain net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.<sup>1</sup> Since the passage of this landmark legislation, Maryland has passed a suite of climate bills and nature positive legislation to support the implementation of CSNA. The legislature's work has been supplemented by Governor Moore's office and several executive orders, including EO 01.01.2024.19 - Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan.<sup>2</sup>

While we must urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions now to prevent further catastrophic effects of climate change, certain impacts are already locked in and likely to continue adversely impacting the state's natural environment and communities in the years to come. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources' HB 254 is a forward-looking bill that tackles current and future climate impacts by investing resources and capacity in the following ways:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0528?ys=2022RS>

<sup>2</sup>

[https://governor.maryland.gov/Lists/ExecutiveOrders/Attachments/52/EO%2001.01.2024.19%20Leadership%20by%20State%20Government-%20Implementing%20Maryland%27s%20Climate%20Pollution%20Reduction%20Plan\\_Accessible.pdf](https://governor.maryland.gov/Lists/ExecutiveOrders/Attachments/52/EO%2001.01.2024.19%20Leadership%20by%20State%20Government-%20Implementing%20Maryland%27s%20Climate%20Pollution%20Reduction%20Plan_Accessible.pdf)

- 1) Increasing Climate Change Resilience of Local Jurisdictions – HB 254 will Create resources, tools, trainings, and streamlined guidance for local governments and communities to undertake climate resilience planning. DNR already maintains several planning tools for use by local planners. HB 254 will create an adaptation and resilience clearinghouse and make these tools more easily accessible, as well as provide user-friendly guidance. This bill is in line with guidance from the Maryland Commission on Climate Change’s 2025 Annual Report, which has three key recommendations for promoting adaptation and resiliency in the state.<sup>3</sup> Among them is the recommendation for DNR to develop a public-facing tracker released in 2026 that promotes Maryland’s progress on the climate adaptive actions listed in the Next Generation Adaptation plan.<sup>4</sup>
- 2) Increasing Climate Change Resilience on Department Lands – A key component of HB 254 is to identify climate vulnerabilities and risks on state parks, wildlife management areas, natural resource management areas, and state forests. This information will help DNR in evaluating opportunities to implement climate change mitigation, adaptation, and/or resilience projects, including nature-based solutions on state lands. By 2035, DNR will model restoration and adaptation practices for two coastal and two inland state properties.
- 3) HB 254 also allows DNR the discretion to partially forgive loans under the Shore Erosion Control Construction Loan Fund, based on ecological restoration and adaptation-based performance indicators. Interest earned through the program will directly flow into DNR funds. This measure is important for DNR programs’ continued functioning.

TNC commends DNR for developing and Chair Korman on introducing this bill. Maryland has a responsibility to invest in climate adaptation and resilience measures to protect both people and environment. HB 254 advances this responsibility with a vision of a healthy and resilient Maryland. **Therefore, we urge a favorable report on HB 254.**

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[https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/MCCC%20Annual%20Report/2025%20MCCC%20Annual%20Report/MCCC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2025.pdf](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/MCCC%20Annual%20Report/2025%20MCCC%20Annual%20Report/MCCC_Annual_Report_2025.pdf)

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<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/MCCC/Documents/Next%20Generation%20Adaptation%20Plan.pdf>

**MDE HB 254 SUP - EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: FAV



The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain

*House Bill 254*

*Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act*

**Position:** Support  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Date:** March 31, 2026  
**From:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 254.

**Bill Summary**

House Bill 254 would remove the sunset associated with the Resilience Through Restoration Capital Grant Fund within the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The fund would provide funding to state agencies, local governments, and non-profit organizations for the planning, design, construction, and adaptive management of nature-based restoration projects that would reduce the State's climate change vulnerabilities and enhance resilience in our communities and public lands. The bill would also require community engagement in project planning and development, along with specialized training provided to local governments. Finally, DNR would be required to complete a climate vulnerability assessment on all Department lands, coupled with an analysis of eligible lands for climate mitigation, adaptation, or resilience projects.

**Position Rationale**

House Bill 254 would reinforce the recently approved Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Agreement), presided over by Governor Wes Moore, in his capacity as Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Executive Council. The Agreement establishes new objectives for improving the Bay's ecological health, expanding public access to natural areas, and strengthening the regional economy, which includes Maryland's \$3.2 billion tourism and \$600 million seafood sectors. The revised Agreement mandates that signatory states reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution by 2040, in addition to pursuing goals related to habitat, fisheries, sustainable landscapes, and community engagement. Concurrently, the Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group of the Maryland Commission on Climate Change (MCCC) has engaged in substantive public outreach over several years to advance climate change adaptation and resilience strategies and safeguard Maryland's communities. Consequently, this bill would directly support MDE's efforts to attain the goals of the Agreement and to implement recommendations developed by the climate experts of the Commission.

Accordingly, MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 254.

**Contact:** Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations  
Cell: 443-931-0937, Email: [jeremy.baker@maryland.gov](mailto:jeremy.baker@maryland.gov)

# **HB254 Audubon\_Fav\_EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Jim Brown

Position: FAV



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21224

March 27, 2026

**To:** Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and members of the Maryland Senate Committee on Education, Energy and the Environment

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland HB 254 Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act**

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of House Bill 254. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change. Along with the undersigned, independent Audubon Chapters across Maryland, we enthusiastically support HB 254

Science tells us birds are in decline due to pollution and habitat loss. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. HB 254 will position Maryland to slow this habitat loss while investing in natural systems to protect habitat, improve water quality and increase resiliency protections that the Chesapeake Bay, our tidal coastlines, forests and parks provide for the region's birds and people. HB 254 will give the Department of Natural Resources the capability to increase community engagement efforts supporting habitat restoration and conservation efforts throughout Maryland. This will ensure that the incredible work of MD DNR and partners such as Audubon includes meaningful, robust public engagement so that the important conservation and restoration work happening in Maryland incorporates voices of those who live and work in the very landscapes where these projects are taking place.

One such collaboration with MD DNR is Audubon's *Marshes for Tomorrow* initiative working with state and federal government, local communities and non-government partners to maintain the best 30,000 acres of tidal salt marsh in Maryland, an ecosystem that is seriously at risk of erosion due to increased coastal flooding and sea level rise. As our [Marshes for Tomorrow](#) plan outlines, this strong collaboration is an investment to support Maryland's economy, provide a protective buffer for coastal communities, strengthen our environment and save threatened species.

HB 254 will make this work stronger, more inclusive, and more reflective of the communities where this work is taking place through tangible actions such as providing childcare during public engagement meetings, provide more opportunities for public engagement with more in-person, and digital community outreach tools about resiliency in Maryland, and the development of more accessible educational materials about conservation and resiliency programs in Maryland.

House Bill 254 will hold Maryland up as a national leader in habitat protection and conservation planning, while strengthening our collective ability to empower communities to participate in meaningful public discourse about improvements to their natural resources and to the places that are important to them.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of House Bill 254.

Thank You,

Jim Brown, Policy Director  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic

Lisa Garrett, President  
Prince George's Audubon Society

Julie Dunlap, Advocacy Chair  
Audubon Society of Central Maryland

Ben Springer, Advocacy Chair  
Southern Maryland Audubon Society

**HB0254\_DNR\_SUP\_EEE\_3-31-26.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lydia McPherson

Position: FAV



*Wes Moore, Governor*  
*Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor*  
*Josh Kurtz, Secretary*  
*David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary*

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March 31, 2026

BILL NUMBER: **HOUSE BILL 254 - THIRD READER**

SHORT TITLE: **SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ADAPTATION ACT**

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: **SUPPORT**

**EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

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The Department supports House Bill 254. Maryland is being transformed by sea level rise and devastating inland floods. The state needs to implement actions to address these changes to support local adaptation and build resilience. Much of the burden of planning for and adapting to climate change impacts is felt at the local-level where flooding, coastal erosion, and sea level rise are experienced regularly. This bill allows for greater program efficiency, strengthened partnerships, and helps advance nature-based resilience programs. It shifts in priorities that will enhance DNR's ability to effectively deliver restoration and adaptation outcomes and including community input without requiring additional resources.

HB254 directs the Department to streamline its data and resources into accessible formats for local climate planning. Providing necessary support through training and guidance will ensure municipalities can integrate DNR data into localized adaptation strategies.

Additionally, the bill makes the popular pilot program known as the Resilience Through Restoration Initiative, or "RtR" and the proposed changes to the Shore Erosion Control Construction Loan Fund, existing barriers will be removed or reduced in access to technical assistance and resources to implement nature-based resilience projects. HB254 also clarifies the Department's ability to compensate community members for their input and guidance on state projects. Systemic barriers—such as financial strain, childcare needs, and a history of mistrust— can often prevent these residents from participating in community outreach efforts. By compensating community members for their time and local expertise, the state can overcome these obstacles and ensure project development is not only inclusive, but effective.

Finally, HB254 sets up an initiative within DNR to implement nature-based adaptation projects on Department lands to serve as strategic demonstrations of climate resilience. Since Maryland's public lands already provide vital benefits—including heat regulation, stormwater management, carbon sequestration, and improved public health—these targeted projects will showcase how the state can protect cultural heritage, create opportunities for outdoor recreation, and enhance biodiversity while adapting to a rapidly changing environment.

Contact: Lydia McPherson, Director, Legislative and Constituent Services  
[lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov](mailto:lydia.mcpherson1@maryland.gov) ♦ 410-260-8113 (office) ♦ 443-875-7785 (cell)

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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The Resilience Through Restoration Initiative or “RtR” launched in 2017 as a pilot program with an ambitious goal of implementing at least 15 nature-based demonstration projects that would address escalating risks from extreme weather and climate-related events. The program has overachieved in its initial project goal and to date has supported the design and construction of 41 projects across Maryland. Of these projects, 16 have been constructed, and construction underway for 5 additional projects, expected to be complete by the end of 2026.

The RtR Initiative successfully leveraged the initial state investment of \$17.25 million over seven years with over \$13.7 million in federal, state and local funding. The program is essential in helping Maryland communities compete successfully for highly competitive federal dollars. The demand for the program has also grown, with annual funding requests from our communities and partners surging from \$1.2 million in FY18 to more than \$31.5 million in FY25. With investments in resilience and restoration supporting 33 jobs per \$1 million invested and saving \$6 on disaster recovery to every \$1 invested, the program is an effective and fiscally responsible program to build community and ecosystem resilience.

DNR’s Shoreline Conservation Service (SCS) provides technical assistance and loans through the Shore Erosion Control Construction Loan Fund to private landowners to design and implement living shoreline projects. With 90% of the shoreline in private ownership, SCS has responded to over 1,800 technical assistance requests since 2022, with nearly 80% of those from individual landowners. While the loan program has been successful in the past, the loan formula in current law hasn’t been updated since 1988 and is a barrier for many looking to participate in the program.

## **BILL EXPLANATION**

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The bill will make several targeted changes to help improve the Department’s ability to support resilience throughout the state, including:

1. **Increase community participation in state projects:** The legislation clarifies the Department’s ability to transfer funding (via contractual agreements) to partner organizations to financially compensate community members for their participation in state-led projects. Compensation enables marginalized communities to overcome obstacles to participation, facilitating diverse input on state initiatives.
2. **Codify Resilience through Restoration:** As a permanent program of the Department, Resilience through Restoration can continue to support community adaptation by requesting and spending federal dollars (and future state dollars) through the program.
3. **Deliver Department data to support local adaption:** The legislation tasks the Department to develop training and guidance to support local governments in integrating state tools and resources into local adaptation planning.
4. **Lower barriers to living shoreline financing:** The legislation provides the Department with the ability to modify the formula associated with the “Shore Erosion Control Construction Loan Fund” to improve access. It also authorises the department to allow loan forgiveness based on certain criteria.
5. **Demonstrate nature-based adaptation:** The legislation requires the Department to identify climate vulnerabilities and risks on two coastal and two inland state owned properties in order to implement projects that will address climate risks. Implemented projects will serve as demonstrations of nature-based climate adaptation that bolster ecological value, community resilience, and potential co-benefits.

# **ShoreRivers Testimony HB254 in EEE.pdf**

Uploaded by: Matt Pluta

Position: FAV



## Testimony in Support of House Bill 254 – Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act

March 27, 2026

To Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB254** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection organization on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect Maryland's Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, education, and engagement.

Environmental restoration projects like tree plantings, native gardens, and innovative drainage can address community problems including chronic flooding, rampant pollution, and heat islands. These projects can make communities safer, healthier, more beautiful, and more economically vibrant. For these projects to succeed and create lasting investment, the community must be engaged in every phase, and must feel some ownership of the project's future use and maintenance. Right now, few restoration projects meet that high standard. **This bill will recognize and fund Community Ambassadors, an important step in building resilient communities to protect both Maryland's historic towns and our irreplaceable rivers.**

Community Ambassadors are community members whose role in a project is formalized and co-designed, and who are paid for their time and expertise. They are often community pillars already doing various kinds of unpaid work to serve the urgent needs of their neighbors. These ambassadors bring valuable insights, including the problems their community faces as well as its strengths; the potential barriers to restoration work; how to reach other community members; and the best times and venues to hold meetings. A Community Ambassador can both represent their community to the project team and can represent the project back to the larger community, answering questions and ensuring that the community's feedback continues to be heard. Paying these community members is an essential part of building trust and transferring ownership of restoration projects, like tree plantings, to the community. If these community members are spending time on an environmental restoration project, they may be spending less time at their paid jobs or caring for their family and community. Fair compensation for the time they spend on a restoration project ensures that capacity isn't being drained from their household and community.

At a 2019 partner meeting about chronic flooding in an underserved Eastern Shore community, the representative of that community in attendance reminded us, "I'm the only person not being paid to be here today." The next time we applied for funding, we made sure to include stipends for such ambassadors, but funders struggled to understand how to budget or categorize those dollars. These relationships are not quite the same as those with professional contractors, though they are just as valuable. **We are in strong support of this bill that both formalizes and values deep, mutual engagement by ensuring fair compensation of Community Ambassadors.**

ShoreRivers currently pays Community Ambassadors in our Tree the Shore program. Working to meet Maryland's ambitious goal to plant five million trees, these ambassadors help to identify sites in their towns that need trees and to reach relevant landowners and decision makers at the individual and municipal level. We are also a Connector and Technical Assistance Provider through the Chesapeake Bay Trust's Community-Based Organization Capacity Building Initiative. This effort helps to mentor small nonprofits, congregations, and community groups in applying for their first

environmental restoration grants. We pay community members for their time to learn the often long and difficult task of applying for this funding, from identifying the right practices to soliciting contractor bids to navigating complex grant portals. One of the first Community Ambassadors we helped secure funding to engage now has a full-time job with a partner organization – Envision the Choptank– working to restore the Choptank River, proving that this model can serve as workforce development and can help add important new perspectives to restoration work in our towns.

Sincerely,  
**Darran White Tilghman, Director of Community Engagement,** and  
**Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper** on behalf of ShoreRivers

**ShoreRivers**  
Scott Budden, Executive Director  
Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper  
Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

[shorerivers.org](http://shorerivers.org) | 443.385.0511 | [info@shorerivers.org](mailto:info@shorerivers.org)

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Complex Script Font: Cambria



# **HB 254\_ Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation**

Uploaded by: Trudy Tibbals

Position: UNF

**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