



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION
2/25/26 at 1pm EST
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 779**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

American Flood Coalition (AFC) appreciates the opportunity to express its **support for HB 779**, Riverine Siting and Design Criteria. AFC is a nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) nonprofit coalition that drives transformational adaptation to protect communities from higher seas, stronger storms, and more frequent flooding. AFC comprises more than 500 elected officials, local leaders, municipalities, civic and military groups, and businesses that work together to advance flood solutions at the local, state, and federal levels.

To build long-term flood resilience, it is crucial for states to apply a flood risk lens across state-funded infrastructure spending, and establish design standards and codes using forward-looking data. These principles help protect life and safety, and ensure good stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Maryland's Coast Smart Council has been doing this for state-funded infrastructure in coastal areas for the last decade, and we commend the legislature for taking this step to expand these principles into riverine areas.

Flood risk extends beyond the currently mapped "100-year floodplain." Areas within the "500-year floodplain" can experience low-probability, but high-consequence flood events that cause significant damage to public infrastructure. These infrastructure investments, like roads, bridges, utilities, and public facilities, often remain in service for decades, and when they are sited or designed without accounting for future flood risk, the state assumes avoidable and recurring liabilities. Repairing or replacing damaged infrastructure after flooding diverts public funds away from schools, healthcare, and other priorities. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce's most recent report on disaster resilience found that, for every \$1 invested in resilience, there is a \$31 return on economic and infrastructure savings.¹ Strong siting and design standards are a cost-effective way to protect those investments upfront.

Applying clear standards for state spending is a matter of responsible governance. Infrastructure investments send signals about where growth is encouraged, and public projects in flood-prone areas can unintentionally increase long-term exposure and risk. By directing the Coast Smart Council to develop siting and design criteria for infrastructure in riverine areas, HB 779 will provide a consistent and predictable framework for managing current and future flood risk in Maryland.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this effort that will protect lives, safeguard taxpayer dollars, and ensure that public infrastructure is built to withstand the conditions it will face over its lifetime.

Respectfully,

Anne Brody
State Government Relations Director

¹ U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Allstate, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. [Beyond the Payoff: How Investments in Resilience and Disaster Preparedness Protect Communities.](#)