CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

House Bill 779
Natural Resources - Riverine Siting and Design Criteria – Requirements

Date: February 1825, 2026
To: Environment and Transportation Committee
Position: **FAVORABLE**
From: Matt Stegman, MD Staff Attorney

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS House Bill 779**, which directs the Coast Smart Council to develop riverine siting and design criteria to address 500-year flood impacts on major State and local capital projects. The bill is a prudent step to ensure projects receiving significant public investment are resilient against major flooding, which is an increasingly more common occurrence in our state.

Extreme storm events have increased over the 20th and early 21st centuries. The Chesapeake Bay region has experienced similar trends to the rest of the northeast and mid-Atlantic U.S., including more annual rainfall and more frequent and intense extreme storms. In 2022, scientists at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration created climate summary reports for each state in the country that showed in Maryland from 1995 to 2020, total annual rainfall was higher than the 1895–2020 long-term average. Extreme rainfall events of 2 inches or more occurred 2.5 days per year from 2005 to 2020 compared to the 1950–2004 average of 1.8 days per year.[1]

Rising air temperatures from climate change means the atmosphere can "hold" more moisture to fuel more rain and intensify storms. This relationship means that annual rainfall amounts and extreme rainfall events are more likely to increase in a warming climate. These events will worsen coastal flooding conditions in the Chesapeake Bay, where the sea level has risen twice as fast as the global sea level rise rate. [2]

According to a June 2025 study from the University of Maryland, future climate projections indicate an increased probability of extreme rainfall events by the end of the 21st century.[3] In the worst-case climate scenario, all Maryland counties could see at least a 30 percent increase in extreme event probability, with some counties experiencing a 60 percent increase.

Flooding is an increasing concern across Maryland, and part of a responsible approach to climate resiliency includes the development of siting and design criteria that will ensure projects receiving major public investment are able to withstand the impacts. For this reason, **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 779.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

[1] Maryland and the District of Columbia - State Climate Summaries 2022
[2] Is the Chesapeake Bay's water rising or is the land sinking?
[3] *Climate change effects on the spatial and temporal distribution of extreme precipitation in the Mid-Atlantic region*, Mizaei *et al*, Urban Climate, Vol. 61, June 2025.