

HEARING DATE: February 11th, 2026

BILL NO: HB 254

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: Support

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

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, adaption, 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