

**Testimony in SUPPORT OF HB254
Supporting Inclusion Community Adaptation Act
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Submitted on Monday February 9, 2026**

To Chair Korman and Committee Members,

My name is Karen Holcomb. My husband and I have a parcel of land on waterfront property at Fairlee Creek, Chestertown Maryland. I urge a FAVORABLE report on HB254.

This Bill:

- Recognizes the value, contributions and impact that community members have in making restoration projects successful. These community ambassadors are contributing their time and efforts and should be paid for the lending of their expertise.
- Provides more accessible grant funding for living shorelines that provide public benefits and activates community ambassadors for resilience, in addition, to supporting community buy in from state agencies, local governments and **nonprofit organizations** for future projects.
- The alteration in this bill allows for grant funding from interest earnings of the Resilience Through Restoration Project Capital Grant Fund to be credited to this Fund. Many underserved or overburdened communities benefit from these restoration projects that incorporate community perspectives and goals in project planning, development and community engagement.

I **support** this bill knowing that the Department of Natural Resources has developed HB254 in part based on a model that the Shore Rivers nonprofit organization has implemented through a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. This grant tasked Shore Rivers to identify 10 non environmental agencies to assist in the planning, development and community engagement for restoration projects related to the Shore Rivers mission. Many participants noted that without this grant support their organizations engagement efforts in the various community collaboration projects would not have been possible.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give **HB254 a favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Karen Holcomb
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