



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

February 25, 2026

BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 779 - FIRST READER

SHORT TITLE: RIVERINE SITING AND DESIGN CRITERIA - REQUIREMENTS

DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION

This bill charges the Coast Smart Council with developing new maps as well as siting and design criteria for capital projects constructed in the 500-year riverine floodplain. The original Coast Smart legislation only applies to projects in the coastal floodplain. The Department supports this expansion because riverine flooding has become an increasingly prevalent issue and the Council is a mechanism already set up to support the appropriate processes needed to screen projects. Several provisions and definitions named in this bill follow existing Council procedure such as the minimum project cost and the development of a waiver process so the bill provisions would not require additional effort to develop.

The amendments suggested by MDE help to further clarify and match the language in this bill to other existing policies. The addition of language to preferentially site projects outside the floodplain first, with designing for floodproofing a secondary option if siting outside the floodplain is not possible, mirrors the current Coast Smart Council guidance and we concur with this addition. The Department also concurs with the amendment that revises the language from “not flooding” to requiring appropriate floodproofing. This amendment would allow for design practices such as wet floodproofing, which the Council recognizes as a reasonable strategy for infrastructure resilience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current authority of the Coast Smart Council is limited to the coastal floodplain. This bill charges the Coast Smart Council with developing new maps as well as siting and design criteria for capital projects constructed in the 500-year riverine floodplain. DNR is the chair and administers the Coast Smart Council. This bill aligns with the Coast Smart regulations.

BILL EXPLANATION

The bill would require the Coast Smart Council to:

1. Develop and implement riverine siting and design criteria by July 1, 2027
2. Produce a map used to define the 500-year riverine flood event
3. Projects must comply starting July 1, 2028

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4. Review and update the riverine siting and design criteria every 5 years if necessary
5. Report to the senate committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment and the house Environment and Transportation committee the results of the above review every 5 years.