

SB739.FAV.ShoreRivers.pdf

Uploaded by: Annie Richards

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 739 – Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study

February 23, 2026

To Chair Beidle and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of **SB739** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection organization on Maryland's Eastern Shore with more than 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect Maryland's Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, education, and engagement.

As an organization dedicated to protecting and restoring Eastern Shore waterways, ShoreRivers works in communities that are already experiencing the impacts of climate change — more frequent flooding, stronger storms, shoreline erosion, and degraded water quality following extreme weather events. These impacts are not abstract or theoretical; they directly affect homeowners, local governments, and the natural resources that define Maryland's coastal and riverine communities. **SB739 directs the University System of Maryland to study the relationship between climate change, homeowner's insurance availability and affordability, and emergency and disaster preparedness.**

ShoreRivers supports the bill's emphasis on evaluating how investments in resilience — such as infrastructure improvements, stronger building codes, and home-level mitigation measures — can reduce risk and be reflected fairly in insurance rates. Incentivizing proactive resilience measures not only helps homeowners but also reduces downstream environmental impacts, including polluted runoff and damage to sensitive aquatic ecosystems following storms.

SB739 centers coordination across agencies and jurisdictions and requires a comprehensive review of emergency management funding structures, best practices from other states, and the long-term sustainability of Maryland's preparedness and recovery systems. This holistic approach is essential for ensuring that Maryland remains resilient in the face of accelerating climate impacts. SB739 recognizes that climate resilience, economic stability, and environmental protection are deeply interconnected. **ShoreRivers urges a favorable report on this bill and looks forward to using the study's findings to support policies that protect Maryland's people, homes, and waterways.**

Sincerely,
Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper on behalf of:

ShoreRivers

Scott Budden, Executive Director

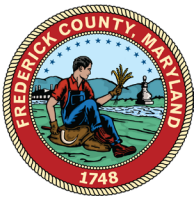
Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

FCDEM Rosano Letter of Support SB0739 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Anthony Rosano

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Anthony Rosano, Director

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SB 0739 / HB 1219
Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study
FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 23, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

As the Vice President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Emergency Managers Affiliate, and the Director of Frederick County Division of Emergency Management, I would like to formally offer my support to Senate Bill 0739. This smart, and forward-leaning bill would require the University System of Maryland to conduct a study to evaluate the relationship between climate change, homeowner's insurance, and emergency management.

Due to the effects of climate change, we have seen an increase in the cost and severity of weather-related disasters. NOAA calculated in 2024 that 27 confirmed weather/climate disaster events exceeded \$1 billion in losses. Increasing disaster costs not only affect communities, but also insurance companies. From 2017 to 2022, home insurance premiums rose 40% faster than inflation, therefore exacerbating the affordability and housing crisis we are experiencing today, and especially so after disasters. Reduced or no coverage home insurance policies shift disaster recovery costs to residents, local governments, and State resources. All this, combined with the reduction of federal grants and the recent denial of disaster declarations, leaves Maryland on the hook for those costs.

The emergency management community is navigating unprecedented times with incredible uncertainty and limited confidence in the federal government. This bill requires an assessment of changing federal policies and funding streams, and an evaluation of how federal funding supports emergency management capabilities across the five core emergency management mission areas. A clear understanding of funding stability and allocation is paramount in supporting our residents, and making our communities resilient.

This bill also supports a review of the National Flood Insurance Program, the Community Rating System, and the private flood insurance market, including recommendations to incentivize homeowners to invest in resilience improvements, something we know lessens the impacts of disasters. NOAA found that collectively, mitigation programs, such as those encouraging more stringent building codes, saves the American public about \$3.4 billion every year.

A weather-related disaster affecting Maryland is not an if, but a when. This bill presents an important opportunity to strengthen Maryland's emergency management framework in a sustainable manner through best practices, recurring dedicated funding mechanisms, and appropriate allocation ratios between preparedness programming and recovery before a disaster strikes. Thus, I respectfully ask this Committee to give SB 0739 a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Anthony Rosano
Director, Frederick County Division of Emergency Management
Vice President, MACo Emergency Management Affiliate

ArundelRiversFAVSB739_climateinsurancestudy.pdf

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



**Testimony in Support of HB779 –
Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management – Study**

Finance Committee
February 25, 2026

Dear Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF SB739**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Deeply rooted in the South, West, and Rhode Rivers, Arundel Rivers Federation heals and protects our waterways and champions clean water across Maryland. Our vision is healthy waterways for all, and we achieve our mission through restoration, education and outreach, and Riverkeeper programs.

Senate Bill 739 represents a proactive and forward-thinking effort to better understand and address the interconnected challenges of climate change, homeowner's insurance, and emergency management in Maryland. The bill authorizes an essential, data-driven study by the University System of Maryland to provide the Maryland General Assembly with the information it needs to develop informed and effective policy solutions.

Communities across Maryland are already experiencing the tangible effects of a changing climate, including stronger storms, increased flooding, and more frequent extreme weather events. These impacts are driving up homeowner's insurance premiums and making affordable coverage harder to obtain for many families. Senate Bill 739 ensures that the State responds strategically and based on evidence, rather than in a reactive, piecemeal manner as conditions intensify.

The study will also analyze how federal programs—such as the National Flood Insurance Program—and private flood insurance markets interact with Maryland's emergency management and disaster preparedness systems. By identifying strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in current policies, the resulting report will help lawmakers pinpoint practical opportunities to strengthen resilience, improve preparedness, and safeguard homeowners.

Ultimately, supporting this bill is an investment in Maryland's long-term stability. By undertaking a comprehensive study now, the General Assembly will be better positioned to craft targeted, durable policies that protect families, reduce financial risk, and enhance the State's ability to respond effectively to natural disasters. A clear understanding of the links between climate impacts, insurance markets, and emergency management is critical to ensuring Maryland's communities remain secure and resilient in the years ahead.

Arundel Rivers Federation strongly supports making our communities more resilient in the face of our changing climate and increased nuisance and storm flooding. For these reasons, we request a **favorable report** on SB739.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West, and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

SB 739 Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and

Uploaded by: Humna Sharif

Position: FAV

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

TO: Senator Pamela Beidle , Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and Committee Members
FROM: Humna Sharif, Climate Adaptation Manager, The Nature Conservancy; Michelle Dietz, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy
POSITION: Support SB 739 Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 739 offered by Senator Kramer. TNC's mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. We work in more than 70 countries and all 50 states in the United States. With the support of more than one million members globally, TNC has been working to conserve, protect, and restore ecosystems and species for nearly 75 years around the world. In Maryland, our work focuses on delivering solutions that secure clean water, air, and healthy, resilient living environments.

SB 739 would require the University System of Maryland to conduct a study to evaluate the relationship between climate change, homeowner's insurance, and emergency and disaster preparedness in the state. The impacts of climate change, through sea level rise, extreme precipitation, and other intense weather events, are causing increased flooding across Maryland. This legislation creates an important pathway for Maryland residents and state agencies to better understand our state's flood risk as climate change induced disasters continue to worsen.

Flooding impacts both inland and coastal communities in Maryland. Last year, Western Maryland communities experienced devastating flooding in Allegheny and Garrett Counties.¹ On the other side of the state, our vibrant coastline is experiencing increased sunny day flooding from sea level rise. Maryland is not alone in experiencing increased flood risk. Nearly every county in the US has experienced some level of flood risk in the last few decades, and this risk is rising rapidly.² In 2025 alone, several states, including Texas, New Mexico and North Carolina experienced devastating floods. These floods were caused by extremely heavy rainfall inland, resulting in overflowing riverbanks and impacting communities residing within riverine floodplains.

Disaster-scale floods are becoming more frequent in a warming climate, impacting areas where insurance is not mandated. The flood insurance gap is growing nationally, as most homeowners' insurance does not cover flooding. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), only 4% of

¹ Tbrown, & Tbrown. (2025, May 16). Governor Moore declares state of emergency in response to historic flooding in western Maryland - MDEM newsroom. MDEM Newsroom. <https://news.maryland.gov/mdem/2025/05/16/governor-moore-declares-state-of-emergency-in-response-to-historic-flooding-in-western-maryland/>

² Fathom. (2026, February 18). US Flood Risk Index – Actionable Insights by state. <https://www.fathom.global/us-flood-risk-index/>

homeowners nationwide have flood insurance.³ While FEMA aid may be available to help people repair their homes after federally declared disasters, it often covers just a fraction of the costs. In the case of flooding experienced last year in Alleghany and Garrett counties, Maryland's request and subsequent appeal for a Major Disaster Declaration and federal aid was denied, leaving the state to cover tens of millions in damages.⁴

While inland flooding caused severe damage last year, Marylanders living across the coastline are even more susceptible to flooding due to rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Maryland's long coastline, of more than 7000 miles, touches 16 counties and the city of Baltimore.⁵ This coastline is intricately linked to the lives and livelihoods of Marylanders and is home to 70 percent of the state's residents - about 4.3 million people based on 2020 census data.⁶

Sea level rise projections prepared by the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) show that sea level will likely rise a foot to a foot and a half between 2000 and 2050—as much as it did over the whole of the last century.⁷ Additionally, the amount of sea level rise that Maryland is expected to experience during the first half of this century will be greater than that experienced during the whole of the last century. By 2100, up to three and a half feet of sea level rise is expected along our coastline.⁸ A 2025 report by the Maryland Comptroller's Office found that nearly all of Maryland's 2.2 million coastal properties are vulnerable to flood damage.⁹ More than 100 communities in Maryland may be at risk of chronic inundation from sea-level rise and storm surges by the end of the century.¹⁰ A conservative cost estimate of what it will take to safeguard businesses, homes, roads, and entire communities in Maryland from chronic flooding alone (not including other climate hazards) by 2040 under a moderate sea-level-rise scenario is \$27.4 Billion.¹¹

The flood insurance gap in Maryland is costing lives and money; it's a gap that the state must step up to understand and address. Maryland has been a leader in advancing climate mitigation and resilience policies, and we cannot rely on FEMA funding and federal policies alone to keep Marylanders safe from the impacts of flooding. SB 739 is timely legislation that helps us move in the right direction. **Therefore, we urge a favorable report on SB 739.**

³ Office, G. A., & Cackley, A. (2024a, November 12). Can FEMA and Flood Insurance Keep Up with the Rising Tide of Risks? Gao.gov. <https://www.gao.gov/blog/can-fema-and-flood-insurance-keep-rising-tide-risks>

⁴ Western Maryland flood survivors left without federal disaster aid after Trump administration denies appeal - Press releases - news - Office of Governor Wes Moore. (n.d.). <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/western-maryland-flood-survivors-left-without-federal-disaster-aid-after-trump-administration-denies-appeal.aspx>

⁵ Hennessee, L., J., Valentino, M., Lesh, A. M., Maryland Geological Survey, & U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (2013). Maryland's shoreline length. <https://dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/documents/mdshorelinemilesreference.pdf>

⁶ Maryland population. (n.d.). <https://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/01glance/html/pop.html>

⁷ Boesch, D. et al. (2023). Sea-level Rise Predictions for Maryland. University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, Maryland Commission on Climate Change. <https://www.umces.edu/sites/default/files/updating-marylands-sea-level-rise-projections.pdf>

⁸ I.D

⁹ Maryland. (2025). State Spending series: Climate change costs. <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/state-spending-series-climate-change-costs-april-2025.pdf>

¹⁰ I.D

¹¹ Center for Climate Integrity, Resilient Analytics, & University of Colorado. (2020). Climate costs in 2040: Maryland [Report]. <https://www.climatecosts2040.org/files/state/MD.pdf>

SB0739-FIN_MACo_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 739

Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: February 25, 2026

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 739.

This bill advances a top priority identified by county emergency managers by directing the University System of Maryland to evaluate Maryland's emergency management funding structure and develop recommendations for sustainable, long-term funding.

Counties fund and operate local emergency management offices and maintain readiness across prevention, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation. Federal disaster funding continues to fluctuate, with reimbursement timelines remaining uncertain and new administrative conditions complicating local budgeting and planning. Counties must sustain staffing, training, communications systems, and coordination capacity regardless of federal instability.

The bill requires the study to examine per capita funding levels, allocation between preparedness and response, recurring dedicated revenue mechanisms, and the impact of federal funding changes on state and local readiness. The study must also evaluate how insurance market pressures intersect with local mitigation investments.

A stable and predictable emergency management funding structure directly affects county readiness and the delivery of essential public safety services. SB 739 provides a practical and responsible step toward that goal.

For these reasons, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 739.

SB739 Climate Change, Insurance Study Econ Action

Uploaded by: Marceline White

Position: FAV



**SB739-Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study
Position: FAV**

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Pam Beidle, Chair
Senate Finance Committee
3 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, Senate Finance

Chair Beidle and Members of the Committee,

Economic Action Maryland Fund writes in support of SB739 which requires the University of Maryland to study the nexus between climate change and homeowners' insurance and provide recommendations to mitigate costs and expand resiliency for homeowners, communities, and insurance producers.

A January 2025 [report](#) from the Federal Insurance Office found that consumers living in the top 20% of ZIP Codes with the highest expected annual losses from climate-related perils paid 82% more than the average for the bottom 20 percent of ZIP Codes. These zip codes also had the highest non-renewal rates from homeowners as their premiums increased.

News articles have reported on the increase in homeowners insurance premiums in areas where climate change may have particularly damaging effect as well as insurance companies refusing to renew or write policies in certain regions of a state, a practice known as [bluelining](#).

There are longer-term implications as well. If prospective homebuyers can't afford costly home insurance, they cannot obtain a mortgage, a particularly salient issue in Maryland where housing demand already outstrips supply. Moreover, if a homeowner has insurance and can no longer maintain it, the homeowner is responsible for costly repairs themselves and the insurance companies can force-place expensive plans onto the homeowner.

For all of these reasons, we need a study to provide state-level solutions to help homeowners afford mitigation and remediation efforts, to require these risks be included in underwriting, and to enable Maryland to act soon in order to protect homebuyers, homeowners, and the industry from future challenges.

We support SB739 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD 21218 | www.econaction.org
Marceline White · Marceline@EconAction.org | Jennifer Bevan-Dangel · Jennifer@EconAction.org

SB0739 Support Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Maria Bernadzikowski

Position: FAV



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Maria Bernadzikowski, and I serve as the Director of Emergency Management for Howard County, as well as the Secretary of the MACo Emergency Management Affiliate. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of Senate Bill 739.

This study is both timely and necessary as Maryland looks ahead to the long-term stability of our emergency management, housing, and insurance systems. The impacts of climate change are no longer isolated events. They are ongoing, overlapping risks that directly affect residents, business owners, insurers, and the ability of local governments to protect lives, property, and community stability. As those charged with coordinating the preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery to all hazards locally, regionally, and statewide, having strong, stable emergency management/climate programs, staffing, and contingency funds has never been more essential.

SB 739 acknowledges what we see every day in practice: climate risk, insurance availability, and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery are closely connected. When insurance becomes unaffordable or unavailable, it has real consequences; recovery takes longer, displacement increases, and local governments are left to fill gaps, often at significant public cost.

In Howard County, and across many jurisdictions in Maryland, these challenges are already being felt. As I write this, emergency managers are in the process of deactivating our Emergency Operations Centers from another snowstorm that had varying impacts across the State. Repeated flooding events, stress on aging infrastructure, and rising recovery costs have become familiar realities. These impacts fall hardest on residents who are least able to absorb financial shocks. As insurance premiums rise or coverage is lost, more residents turn to public assistance and local government support after disasters, placing additional strain on county and city resources.

At the same time, the emergency management community is navigating significant uncertainty at the federal level, creating cascading impacts to state and locals. Changes to disaster preparedness funding, mitigation programs, climate resilience, and recovery support make it even more important for Maryland to understand how climate risk, changes in federal support, and insurance market trends will affect local readiness and long-term recovery. SB 739 provides an opportunity to examine these issues together and to plan thoughtfully, rather than reacting after gaps have already emerged.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support this legislation and ensure Maryland remains prepared for the evolving threats ahead.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Maria Bernadzikowski

Maria Bernadzikowski
Director, Howard County Office of Emergency Management
Secretary, MACo Emergency Management Affiliate

SB 739 - MIA - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Marie Grant

Position: FAV

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor



MARIE GRANT
Commissioner

JOY Y. HATCHETTE
Deputy Commissioner and
Acting Associate Commissioner,
Property & Casualty Insurance

200 St. Paul Place, Suite 2700, Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Direct Dial: 410-468-2113
1-800-492-6116 TTY: 1-800-735-2258
www.insurance.maryland.gov

Date: February 25, 2026

Bill # / Title: Senate Bill 739 - Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) appreciates the opportunity to share its support for Senate Bill 739.

Senate Bill 739 would direct the University System of Maryland to execute a study and submit a report to the General Assembly by January 1, 2027 on the relationship between climate change, the availability and price of homeowner's insurance, and emergency and disaster preparedness. The study and report would be overseen by and completed in coordination with a workgroup consisting of one senator, one delegate, four State agencies, a county emergency manager, and a municipal emergency manager. State agencies represented on the workgroup would include the MIA, Department of Natural Resources, Department of the Environment, and Maryland Department of Emergency Management.

Among other things, the study and report mandated under Senate Bill 739 would examine the extent to which climate change has contributed to the decreasing availability of and increasing costs associated with homeowner's insurance, as well as the current state of the National Flood Insurance Program, Federal Community Rating System, and private flood insurance market. The report would offer recommendations on how the State can incentivize residents to invest in structural improvements to mitigate the risk of damage to their homes resulting from extreme weather events. The report would also recommend potential modifications to the Insurance Article to ensure that insurers appropriately adjust premium rates for policyholders who have invested in certain home hardening improvements or reside in localities that have implemented infrastructure improvements or building code enhancements that strengthen community resilience to severe weather events.

The study and report required under Senate Bill 739 should result in actionable recommendations concerning legislative options to encourage and facilitate investments in resiliency mitigation measures by homeowners and communities. The bill provides a vehicle for in-depth analysis of

how Maryland law could be revised to require that insurers systematically and fairly account for the risk-reducing benefits of such mitigation measures when establishing rates for homeowner's insurance policies.

For the reasons set forth above, the MIA urges a favorable committee report on Senate Bill 739 and thanks the Committee for the opportunity to share its support.

Letter in Support of HB 1219, SB 739 2026 Session.

Uploaded by: Preeti Emrick

Position: FAV



LETTER IN SUPPORT OF HB 1219 /SB 739

**CLIMATE CHANGE, HOMEOWNER’S INSURANCE, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT – STUDY
HOUSE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE/ SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE**

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Emergency Managers Affiliate, we respectfully submit this letter in **SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 739 – Climate Change, Homeowner’s Insurance, and Emergency Management – Study.

SB 739 directs the University System of Maryland to evaluate the relationship between climate change, homeowner’s insurance availability and affordability, and emergency and disaster preparedness. For emergency managers, this intersection carries direct operational and fiscal consequences.

As climate-related hazards intensify, insurance markets are adjusting. Higher premiums, increased deductibles, or reduced coverage shift more disaster recovery costs to residents, local governments, and State resources. This dynamic increases pressure on emergency management programs responsible for coordinating response operations, administering recovery assistance, and advancing mitigation and resilience planning.

The bill appropriately requires an assessment of changing federal policies and funding streams and an evaluation of how federal funding supports emergency management capabilities across the five FEMA mission areas. Federal grants are foundational to local emergency management staffing, training, exercises, hazard mitigation planning, and recovery administration. A clear understanding of funding stability and allocation is essential to maintaining these core capabilities.

SB 739 also directs a review of the National Flood Insurance Program, the Community Rating System, and the private flood insurance market, along with recommendations to incentivize homeowners to invest in resilience improvements. Strengthening mitigation at the household level reduces disaster losses, accelerates recovery, and decreases long-term demand on public disaster assistance systems.

Finally, the bill’s examination of best practices for funding emergency management capabilities, including recurring dedicated funding mechanisms and appropriate allocation ratios between

preparedness programming and recovery, presents an important opportunity to strengthen Maryland's emergency management framework in a sustainable manner.

For these reasons, the Emergency Managers Affiliate respectfully requests a **favorable report on Senate Bill 739**.

Sincerely,

Preeti Emrick

Preeti Emrick

President
MACo Emergency Managers Affiliate

SB 739_Maryland LCV_FAV_Climate Change, Homeowner'

Uploaded by: Rebecca Rehr

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION
VOTERS**

**Maryland LCV
Board of Directors**

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Honorable Nancy Kopp
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Honorable Steve Lafferty
Kevin Loeb

Kim Coble
Executive Director

February 25, 2026

**SUPPORT: SB 739 Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and
Emergency Management – Study**

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV Supports SB 739 - Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management – Study and we thank Senator Kramer for his leadership on this issue.

SB 739 requires the University System of Maryland to conduct a study to evaluate the relationship between climate change, homeowner's insurance, and emergency and disaster preparedness. This study can help provide more information on several issues that have come to light in the past few years, and complement ongoing work in the state to evaluate the full costs of climate change.

The U.S. Senate Budget Committee looked into these issues in a 2024 [study](#). [Across all U.S. counties](#), those in the top 20% for climate-driven disaster risk saw home insurance premiums increase by 22% between 2020 and 2023, compared to an overall average of a 13% rise in real terms. This is concerning because [climate-related disasters are increasing in Maryland counties](#), which, based on trends throughout the rest of the country, is likely to lead to a steeper rise in home insurance premiums. Counties including Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Prince George's have experienced a [steady rise in non-renewal rates for homeowners insurance due to flooding risks and severe storms](#), with premiums increasing in these counties by up to 20% since 2018. Prince George's County in particular recorded the highest number of non-renewals each year between 2018-2023. Likewise, the [non-renewal rate](#) of homeowners insurance in Maryland has steadily increased since 2020, with a non-renewal rate of 0.36% in 2020 up to a 0.65% non-renewal rate in 2023. While climate-related insurance challenges are being felt nationwide, particularly in states like Florida, California, and Louisiana, Maryland's unique position on the East Coast, vulnerable to flooding and severe storms, has led to significant concern. National insurers have already pulled out of other high-risk states, and experts fear that similar actions could occur in Maryland if the current trends persist.

For these reasons, Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on SB 739.

30 West Street, Suite C
Annapolis, MD 21401
Phone: 410-280-9855

www.mdldcv.org

SB 739_realtors_fav.pdf

Uploaded by: William Castelli

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 739 – Climate Change, Homeowner’s Insurance, and Emergency Management -- Study

Position: Favorable

Maryland REALTORS® support a study of climate change impacts on homeowner’s insurance availability and cost.

While severe weather is only one component of rising home insurance premiums, it is an important factor. Some states impacted by severe weather have seen insurance premium hikes by over 20% in just one year. That resulted in some homeowners paying more than \$500 per month in **increased** insurance premiums.

While Maryland insurance premiums have not increased that dramatically, they have risen about 20% over a four-year period 2021-2024, exceeding inflation. Added to this challenge are changes in how the federal government responds to natural disasters with states likely playing a bigger role in responding to and paying for disaster assistance.

SB 739 can play an important role in identifying solutions to help lower increasing home insurance premiums. For these reasons, the Maryland REALTORS® recommend a favorable report.

For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org



SB739_USM_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Andy Clark

Position: FWA



SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Senate Bill 739

Climate Change, Homeowner's Insurance, and Emergency Management - Study

February 25, 2026

Favorable with Amendment

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on Senate Bill 739. The bill directs the University System of Maryland (USM) to conduct a comprehensive study examining how climate change is affecting homeowner's insurance markets and shaping the state's emergency and disaster preparedness needs. The bill also requires the evaluation of federal and private flood insurance programs, an assessment of emerging risks facing Maryland communities, and recommend actions to improve insurer responsiveness and resilience.

The USM is comprised of twelve distinguished institutions and three regional centers. We award eight out of every ten bachelor's degrees in the State. Each of USM's 12 institutions has a distinct and unique approach to the mission of educating students and promoting the economic, intellectual, and cultural growth of its surrounding community. These institutions are located throughout the state, from western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, with the flagship campus in the Washington suburbs. The USM includes three Historically Black Institutions, comprehensive institutions and research universities, and the country's largest public online institution.

The USM supports the goals of the legislation and stand ready to work with our institutional and state agency partners to carry out the study as described. At the same time, we suggest two modifications to strengthen the bill.

Given the extent of the work involved and the expertise needed to develop an effective study, we anticipate there would be some need for funding to cover work group expenses, meeting costs, printing, specialized IT assistance, and any expert consulting that may be needed. We'd suggest a nominal budget of \$150,000 be included in the bill to cover such expenses.

Finally, given the breadth of this study and the need for iterative reviews including a public comment period, we suggest a deadline of July 1, 2027 to be a more appropriate timeframe for completion.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on Senate Bill 739. We look forward to working with you and the oversight group to review flood insurance programs, develop recommendations for incentivizing private homeowners to mitigate damage from extreme weather events, and identify the policy, funding, and training improvements described in the bill.



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
of MARYLAND

