



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education

Senate Bill 822

Public Safety – Maryland Emergency Management Agency – Office of Resilience

Date: March 4, 2021

To: Senate Education, Health and Environmental
Affairs Committee

Position: **Support**

From: Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff
Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS** SB 822 as elevating the need for coordinated resilience planning efforts throughout Maryland.

Confronting climate change and improving resiliency supports the Chesapeake Bay's recovery

This bill establishes the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency to coordinate State and local efforts to build resilience to risks identified in the Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan, develop risk assessment tools and administer the National Flood Insurance Program in coordination with the Department of the Environment.

Climate change and sea level rise pose resiliency challenges to Maryland. Rising sea levels threaten to inundate miles of Chesapeake shoreline. For the Chesapeake Bay, warmer waters exacerbate the Bay's dead zones, stressing fish and other forms of marine life critical to the Bay's restoration.¹

Building resiliency to sea-level rise will help protect vulnerable populations along the Bay's coast

In low-lying areas throughout Maryland, storm surges combined with higher sea levels and increasingly erratic storm activity may create a "perfect storm" that will flood thousands of acres. Many of those areas are economically disadvantaged, and the combination of flooding and limited access to emergency facilities—facilities that might themselves be flooded—could be disastrous.

Access to federal and private funding will support Maryland's efforts on climate and the hazards created by climate change

This bill rightfully elevates the importance of resiliency through establishing an Office of Resilience and requiring the coordination of several available federal, state and private revenue streams. Building resilience will demand resources beyond the State's budget for assessment tools and projects to protect vulnerable communities in the face of rising seas levels and stronger, more frequent storm events.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 822. For more information, contact Robin Jessica Clark, Maryland Staff Attorney at rclark@cbf.org or 443.995.8753.

¹ How Climate Change Impacts the Chesapeake Bay, [Climate Change](#), Chesapeake Bay Foundation, last visited 2.12.2021.