



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Crumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 822 – Public Safety - Maryland Emergency Management Agency - Office of Resilience

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed Senate Bill 822, entitled Public Safety - Maryland Emergency Management Agency - Office of Resilience and would like to offer a letter of information about this legislation.

Senate Bill 822 would create an Office of Resilience in the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The Office of Resilience would be responsible for guiding state's resilience initiatives, leveraging federal and private emergency response funding resources, building partnerships with public, private and non-governmental organizations in all stages of emergency planning and management, administering Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation grant programs and recovery-focused programs, administering state mitigation grants, administering the National Flood Insurance Program in coordination with MDE, and developing flood risk assessment tools for use by statewide programs and projects. It would also repeal the portion of § 5-803 of the Environment Article, which provides that MDE coordinates activities with the National Flood Insurance Program and replaces it with a requirement that MDE coordinate with the Office of Resilience to administer the National Flood Insurance Program.

In effect, this bill takes the National Flood Insurance Program, currently housed in MDE, and makes it a jointly administered program with the newly created Office of Resilience in MEMA. It is not clear where the National Flood Insurance Program will be housed after the bill (in MEMA or MDE), as now both the Environment Article and Public Safety Article would tell each agency to administer the program in coordination with the other. The roles of the Office of Resilience and MDE are not clear and it is confusing as to who has the lead in administering the flood program.

This bill is in direct competition with Senate Bill 0062, which also creates a new § 14-104.1 to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency Act subtitle of the Emergency Management Title of the Public Safety Article of the Maryland Code. The new subtitle would create a Chief Resilience Officer within MEMA and would require MDE to assist the officer with the National Flood Insurance Program.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 822 during the Committee's

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky

deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott", written over a horizontal line.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Katie Fry Hester