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Maryland

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1 March 2021

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

Re: Letter of Support for SB 0822
Public Safety-Maryland Emergency Management Agency-Office of Resilience

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

AIA Maryland and many of our colleagues across the US have acted to support communities in responding to disasters and proactively considering measures for preparedness. Disasters faced from forest fires, to tornadoes, hurricanes, tropical storms and heavy rains - and even the recent polar vortex that greatly affected communities and deeply impacted individuals lives, forces us to think and learn from these events and to assess how can we be better prepared and mitigate the impacts of disasters.

We support establishing a Maryland Office of Resilience. We believe that initiatives should proactively mitigate potential flood hazards and to be reactive to appropriately respond to emergency and recovery efforts. We encourage State departments and agencies like MEMA to work with organizations who can bring expertise to planning and code development when considering issues of flood mitigation and, organizations that can provide post disaster assistance. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) actively participates in building code development and enforcement and permitting which impacts communities and structures that already exist as well as new construction. We encourage the Office of Resilience to work with organizations like The AIA to train members and share lessons from post disaster building assessments. We are broadening our network of licensed architects who are trained to assist with post disaster building safety assessments and we connect with other state chapters across the country to build knowledge and share lessons learned.

We believe that incorporating building resilience in our state's planning will assist communities to assess how to lower risks and enable them to have a broad support network to assist should a disaster strike. We support Senate Bill 0822 and planning efforts that will enable us to continue to enjoy over 3,000 miles of shoreline that we have in Maryland.

Sincerely,

Chris Parts, AIA
Director, Past President

cc: Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee:

Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
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Mary Beth Carozza
Clarence Lam
Mary Washington

Arthur Ellis
Obie Patterson

Jason Gallion
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[The American Institute of Architects](#)

AIA Maryland
86 Maryland Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

T (410) 263 0916

www.aiaMaryland.org