

SUPPORT SB 733 / HB 1458 & HB 966 & HB 948

Topic: Chief Resilience Officer of the Commonwealth; Office of Commonwealth Resilience; Interagency. Includes Advisory Review Committee for CFPF and RVRP

Bill Patron: Sen. Marsden; Del. Hernandez, Del. Pugh Kent, Del. Lopez

OVERVIEW:

This bill codifies key recommendations from the Administration's Resilience Coordination Working Group which convened throughout 2023; this bill will ensure Virginia's CRO has the authority, staff, and resources to drive effective communication and collaboration so Virginia can successfully compete for a variety of funding opportunities and advance resilience throughout the Commonwealth and serve Virginians in a changing climate.

This bill would also ensure transparency and oversight of key resilience funds (the Community Flood Preparedness Fund and the Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund) which have distributed nearly \$100 million since 2021 to localities throughout the Commonwealth for planning, studies, and projects to reduce community-scale flood risk.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

- Climate resilience is an interdisciplinary challenge that impacts many agencies and requires a whole-of-government approach. This bill will position the Commonwealth to pursue federal funding opportunities and increase collaboration and coordination within and across state agencies so they can better serve Virginians in a changing climate.
- Currently, Virginia's Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) is also the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources. This bill creates a standalone CRO situated in the Governor's office, because resilience is a full-time role that requires cooperation across many agencies.
- This bill creates an Office of Commonwealth Resilience; VCN is advocating for 6 FTEs for this office and a needs assessment in 2025 to reevaluate resource needs. This bill will also create an Interagency Resilience Working Group, made up of agency staff designated as Resilience Coordinators, to work with the CRO on long-term climate adaptation and resilience planning within their agencies, share and integrate common language and practices, and monitor and collaborate on federal funding opportunities.
- The Community Flood Preparedness Fund has distributed nearly \$100 million to localities across the Commonwealth since 2021 for flood resilience initiatives; more than half of the funding has gone to low-income localities. Grant programs of this amount typically have oversight, so this bill creates an external Advisory Review Committee to complement DCR's application review and ensures information is posted online.



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