



Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Councilmember Brandon T. Todd, Chair  
Committee on Government Operations

**Re: B23-0130 – District of Columbia Office of Resilience Establishment Act of 2019**

Good morning Councilmembers Todd, Grosso, Silverman, White, and Nadeau. My name is Ari Eisenstadt, and I am the District of Columbia Conservation Advocate for the Audubon Naturalist Society. On behalf of our 10,000-member organization, thank you for your support for the District of Columbia Office of Resilience Establishment Act of 2019. I know you understand the critical importance of ensuring that our city is resilient to the harm that climate change and other stresses cause. I would, however, like to speak to the necessity of formally dedicating government resources to resilience, especially for the District's most vulnerable populations.

We applaud the Council's action to mitigate the city's impact on the intensity of climate change through the Clean Energy DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2018. While mitigation efforts are crucial to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, negative impacts of the climate crisis are already here. Unprecedented flooding is happening now. Heat emergencies are happening now. Mass species extinctions are happening now, and this city must respond. First and foremost, resilience is an equity issue. Those of us who are most impacted by extreme weather are often least equipped to manage it. The proposed City Resilience Framework outlined by the Office of Resilience Establishment Act of 2019 prioritizes stakeholder engagement and allotment of resources to help the most vulnerable among us withstand the effects of the climate crisis. The Office of Resilience will ensure that those most affected by inequity are given a voice in their government- a voice that advocates for community agency and fair resource allocation in handling shocks and stressors.

While climate change is but one of the city's identified stressors, it has the unique ability to influence and amplify all others. Climate resilience will buffer our beloved city from the worst effects of climate change and it will provide a path toward creating a more equitable society for all residents. The Resilient DC and Climate Ready DC plans acknowledge that the District is in dire need of infrastructure, both physical and institutional, to improve vulnerable populations' ability to respond to crisis. The four goals of the Resilient DC strategy, Inclusive Growth, Climate Action, a Smarter DC, and Safe and Healthy Washingtonians, depend on the government's ability to devote resources to navigate and honor the complex racial, socioeconomic, and environmental dynamics of this city. The Office of Resilience is an essential

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tool in realizing the District's resilience goals and creating a city that works for all its residents. The Office will bridge the gap between siloed government agencies to generate the equity in governance that is one of the two focus areas of the Resilient DC Plan.

I urge the Council to vote to pass the Act and establish the Office of Resilience. In doing so, the Council will position Washington, DC as an urban leader and model of equity for the rest of the country as we continue to adapt to a changing world.

Thank you,

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