



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

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Testimony in Support SB 135 - Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act

To: Chairman Pinsky and the members of the Education, Health and
Environmental Affairs Committee

From: Phil Webster, PhD - Lead Advocate, Climate Change
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

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The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 135 Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act** and urges a FAVORABLE report by the committee.

The UULM-MD is a faith-based advocacy organization based on the Principles of Unitarian Universalism. Two Principles are particularly relevant. The Second Principle, Justice, equity and compassion in human relations and the Seventh Principle, Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

We believe in justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We know that global climate change impacts under-invested communities first and worst. This legislation implicitly recognizes that fossil fuels have—and continue to—drive climate change; and that the cost to remediate negative effects must be borne by the fossil fuel industries, in the form of fees on fossil fuels. Residents of communities that are located near sources of pollution (ie: separated by a fence or fence line communities) have suffered significant damage to their health and their economic fortunes due to environmental pollution and this Act recognizes that damage with 25% of the fees raised to be invested in environmental remediation in their communities. This is a significant point. It is equally significant that an additional 40% of the fees will go to families and individuals which the increased cost of fossil fuels is a significant burden. The Act also creates a Climate Crisis Council specifically to administer these funds.

We also believe that we should all have respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. We all know that the growing use of fossil fuels increases greenhouse gasses leading to increasing global temperatures. The increasing fees on fossil fuels will incentivize individuals and businesses to reduce (and eventually end) the use of fossil fuels. At the same time, up to 25% of the fees will be disbursed by local governments to mitigate greenhouse gasses (GHG) and build resilience.

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This Act recognizes the following. The use of fossil fuels is driving climate change. Changing the trajectory of climate change requires incentivizing significant reductions in the use of fossil fuels. Increasing the cost of the fuels is the most effective way to accomplish this. This bill will benefit the very communities who have suffered disproportionately greater damage from the use of fossil fuels and will receive significant remedy from the fees. It will also hold the fossil fuel industries accountable for the harm that they have done and continue to do without bearing any of the costs to clean up their byproducts. You wouldn't allow your child to continually trash your house, why should we not expect the same of a multi-billion dollar industry? It all boils back to fairness, how can there be justice and equity if one part of society is reaping all of the benefits, while another is paying all of the costs? This bill is just one step closer to solving that disparity.

Please keep us on the right and moral path towards a livable climate and a sustainable world. We owe it to our children.

We support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Phil Webster, PhD

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