



Committee: Health and Government Operations
Testimony on: HB0347 – Attorney General – Climate Change Actions –
Authorization
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 22, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB347. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB347.

HB347 authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, prosecute or defend any suit or action to hold a publicly traded entity, with market capitalization greater than \$1,000,000,000, or its subsidiaries accountable for unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change. The bill also authorizes the Attorney General to hire outside counsel to assist with an action as needed.

Climate change is an existential threat globally and poses a very real challenge for Maryland. Attorneys General in states like Massachusetts and the District of Columbia have used their authority to sue major oil and gas companies that spent millions to mislead consumers and discredit climate science in pursuit of profits. The DC lawsuit, for example, alleges major players in the fossil fuel industry knew as early as the 1950s that emissions from burning oil and gas posed a threat, and yet the companies invested multi-millions of dollars in public relations campaigns to foster doubt and hostility towards climate scientists and their research.

HB 347 would enable the Maryland Attorney General to bring such lawsuits against major corporations for unlawful conduct and would provide a powerful tool for Maryland to hold corporations accountable for their role in worsening climate change. We recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for HB347 in committee.