



HB347 – Attorney General-Climate Change Actions- Authorization

Testimony before

House Health and Government Operations Committee

February 22, 2023

Position: Favorable

Mdm. Chair, Mdm. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Virginia Smith, and I represent the 750+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB347**, which would authorize the Attorney General to investigate, commence and prosecute or defend any suit or action that holds accountable certain companies that unlawfully contribute to climate change. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We appreciate the leadership of Delegate Ruth in sponsoring this important legislation.

Climate change is one of the most urgent issues impacting our society today. Maryland is working in many ways to combat the release of greenhouse gases, including converting to renewable sources for energy, bills to encourage the transition to electric autos, and various others. This bill will tackle a different aspect to the climate change fight. It would allow the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute, as well as defend, any civil or criminal suit that holds accountable a publically traded entity with a market capitalization greater than \$1 billion or its subsidiaries for any tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that contributed to climate change through fraud, deception, or any other mechanism, action, inaction, or practice.

For these reasons, we support HB347.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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