



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate C.T. Wilson, Chair
Delegate Brian M. Crosby, Vice Chair
Economic Matters Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/15/2024
RE: HB1438 - Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act

The MLLC supports HB1438 - Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act, 2024

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB1438.

Fossil fuels are by far the most significant contributor to global climate change, accounting for over 75% of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly 90 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions, and are the leading cause of our warming climate.¹ According to the NIH, studies of heat, extreme cold, hurricanes, flooding, and wildfires find evidence that people of color, including Black, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Asian communities, are at higher risk of climate-related health impacts than Whites, although this is not always the case.² Studies of adults have found evidence of racial disparities related to climatic changes with respect to mortality, respiratory and cardiovascular disease, mental health, and heat-related illness. Children are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of climate change, and infants and children of color have experienced adverse perinatal outcomes, occupational heat stress, and increases in emergency department visits associated with extreme weather.³

HB1438 would respond to the increasing costs associated with mitigating the impact of fossil fuels in our communities. would establish a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Payment Program in the Maryland Department of the Environment that would accomplish the following:

- Secure compensatory payments from fossil fuel businesses to provide revenue for state efforts to adapt to and mitigate climate change impacts.
- Payments would be based on a standard of strict liability tied to the company's historical greenhouse gas emissions.
- Companies responsible for over 1 billion tons of emissions would owe payments. The total liability for all companies combined is set at \$9 billion.

Payments would go into a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Fund to support state infrastructure projects, health programs, and other efforts to address climate change. Additionally, at

¹ [\(United Nations\)](#)

² [\(National Library of Medicine\)](#)

³ Ibid

least 40% of spending must benefit communities disproportionately affected by climate impacts. Companies can pay the full amount by 2026 or make payments over 9 years. Failure to pay may trigger the total amount becoming immediately due. The bill also specifies many allowed uses for money distributed from the new Fund, including for flood control projects, clean energy programs, environmental justice efforts, and climate-related staff positions. The Department of Environment must adopt implementing regulations for the program by 2025.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB1438.