



Committee: Energy, Education, and Environment

Testimony on: SB 958, The Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act

Organization: Mobilize Frederick

Submitting: Karen Cannon, Executive Director

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 20, 2024

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 958, the Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act. Mobilize Frederick urges the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on this important bill.

Mobilize Frederick is an organization of Frederick City and County residents formed in 2022 to assist with implementing the recommendations of a comprehensive 2021 climate report that will put Frederick on the path to a safer, healthier, more resilient community through innovative and effective local solutions.

Like many other communities across Maryland, the City and County of Frederick are experiencing first-hand the impacts of climate change – higher temperatures, periods of extreme heat, extended drought, and high intensity storms that have caused repeated flooding and severe wind damage. Two recent extreme weather events in 2015 and 2018 caused severe flooding, stormwater and sewer system backups, and millions of dollars of damage in the City of Frederick. Flood levels in one residential area rose as high as 2.7 feet and made primary roads inaccessible to emergency responders. Costly upgrades to the City's stormwater management system are needed to reduce the risk of flood damage from future extreme weather events.

The RENEW Act is a vitally important revenue-raising bill that, through a one-time fee on international out-of-state fossil-fuel companies with the largest historical greenhouse gas emissions of more than 1 billion tons between 2000 and 2018, will fund a Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Fund, thereby shifting the cost of climate mitigation and adaptation projects currently being shouldered by taxpayers to companies responsible for causing the pollution.

The RENEW Act would raise \$9 billion dollars for investment in critical Maryland infrastructure and programs needed to prepare for and recover from a warming climate and increasingly more extreme weather events. Collectively, these companies will be required to pay Maryland \$900 million a year over a ten-year period. Each company would pay a percentage of the total that is proportional to that company's emissions over the covered period. Approximately 40 out-of-state companies that do business in Maryland would be subject to the one-time penalty.¹ The penalty will cost these companies roughly one fifth of one percent of their annual profits.

The funds raised by this bill would go to a wide range of climate change programs, including those that: fund local government flood management projects; disaster recovery; shoreline protection; clean energy resources; energy efficiency projects for low- and moderate-income households; resiliency hubs; zero-emission school buses, trucks and buses; electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and many more that are already doing the work of preparing Maryland for more extreme weather.

Low-income communities and communities of color located near highway corridors, trucking hubs, and industrial facilities have been disproportionately harmed by emissions from fossil fuels that degrade air quality. These frontline communities are also experiencing the worst impacts of climate change. Under the RENEW Act, 40 percent of all investments made by the Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Fund must benefit overburdened, underserved communities (as defined by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022). This is an important step toward addressing those historical and ongoing harms.

Marylanders overwhelmingly support the public policies embodied in the RENEW Act. In a December statewide poll of registered voters conducted by Gonzales Research & Media Services for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, 68 percent of those surveyed expressed support for the policies contained in the RENEW Act. The full results of the poll are available [here](#).

¹ The companies are: Saudi Aramco, ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex), BP, Peabody Energy, Chevron, Petroleos de Venezuela (PDVSA), TotalEnergies, ConocoPhillips, Petronas, Glencore, Equinor, Contura Energy / ANR, ENI, Arch Coal, Rio Tinto, Anglo American, Occidental, Sinopec, Repsol, Libya National Oil Corp., Oil & Gas Corp., CNOOC (China National Offshore Oil Co.), RWE, CONSOL Energy, Sasol, Suncor, Devon Energy, EnCana/Onvativ, Ecopetrol, Apache, Murray Coal, Cloud Peak Energy, Alliance, Chesapeake Energy, Marathon, EOG Resources, Westmoreland, Hess, HeidelbergCement, and Teck Resources.

The RENEW Act will provide a significant and sustained source of funding that is needed to build Maryland's resiliency to the impacts of climate change. For all the foregoing reasons, we urge the Committee to issue a **favorable** report on SB 958.

Karen Cannon

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Cc: Kathy Kinsey
Chair, Government Affairs & Policy Committee