



HB1078 – Attorney General - Climate Change Actions - Authorization

Testimony before House Health & Government Operations Committee

March 10, 2021

Position: Favorable

Madame Chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **support of HB1078**, which will provide our State Attorney General with stronger authority in dealing with Fossil Fuel companies and the ramifications for Maryland due to Climate Change. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members).

A 2019 report by the Center for Climate Integrity estimates that Maryland taxpayers will be on the hook for more than **\$27 billion** in costs by 2040, related to rising seas and flooding due to climate change. Low lying areas of Annapolis, Baltimore, as well as extensive areas of the Eastern Shore are already seeing the effects of nuisance flooding, worsening storm surges and damage to agricultural regions from saltwater intrusion.

25 cities and states around the U.S. have already filed suit against fossil fuel companies, as mounting evidence makes it clear that they knew the effects their products would have on our planetary climate. But Maryland's Attorney General is prohibited by law in bringing in outside counsel to provide the extensive resources needed to bring such a suit on behalf of the State of Maryland. Only the Governor can do that. This needs to change, and soon.



HB1078 does just that, by empowering the State Attorney General with the ability to hire outside counsel on a fee contingent basis, to take on this type of complex litigation. This change is very much needed, in order that Maryland can begin to confront the very corporations that **knowingly** caused this damage to our state and its ecosystems.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

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