



**MARYLAND  
LEAGUE OF  
CONSERVATION  
VOTERS**



**CHESAPEAKE BAY  
FOUNDATION**  
*Saving a National Treasure*



**ccan**  
**ACTION FUND**



**Chair C.T. Wilson  
Economic Matters Committee  
Testimony in Support of the Climate and Health Superfund Act  
HB 0915  
March 6, 2023**

We are writing to urge a favorable report on HB 0915.

The costs of a warmer climate are being paid right now by municipalities across the state. Annapolis is spending \$50 million to rebuild the downtown dock because higher sea levels caused the old one to regularly flood. Howard County had to rebuild its Ellicott City twice after being hit by two once in a thousand year rain events in under two years. Everywhere cities and counties are paying to replace old culverts that are no longer able to handle the increased intensity of rain events with larger ones.

The cost of climate change will only go up in the near future. Installing air conditioning in public schools that never used to need it will cost Maryland [\\$776 million this decade](#), and with 3 thousand miles of coastline, sea level rise is expected to cost Maryland upwards of [\\$27 billion by 2040](#).

Right now, these costs are being paid by local governments and their tax paying residents. However, the liability for the climate crisis should fall squarely on the shoulders of the giant international fossil fuel companies who knew about this crisis and lied about it to stop policies that could have prevented it.

In 2021, Senator Van Hollen introduced a policy in the 116th Congress that would have taken money directly from the record profits of the largest historical emitters of fossil fuels and used it to help pay for the costs caused by climate change. HB 0915 is based on Senator Van Hollen's policy.

For half a century, superfunds have been a proven policy mechanism for making companies pay to clean up their toxic pollution. More than 30 superfunds are currently operating in Maryland today. While HB 0915 does not officially create a superfund through the EPA, it uses the same model. It would charge the largest historical emitters of climate pollution for their contribution to the crisis. The funds would then be used to pay for adaptation costs such as installing larger culverts to handle more intense precipitation events, rebuilding from storms, construct coastal defenses, and more. The funds can also be used to install heat pumps in buildings that now need Air Conditioning because of warmer temperatures, such as public schools.

Health impacts from working in hotter climates is making clear that the climate crisis is a public health crisis. Already, [Nepal's health system is experiencing a surge of kidney failure cases](#) from people who had worked outdoor labor in middle eastern countries. These warmer parts of the world are bell weathers for what we can expect to see in Maryland in the near future.

When heat waves cause high levels of organ failure here at home, it will be important to make sure all Marylanders have access to high quality, affordable health insurance. Healthcare is climate adaptation. That is why this legislation uses a portion of the funds to expand ACA subsidies to undocumented Marylanders, something that is long overdue.

HB 0915 ensures that the costs of these charges are not passed along to energy consumers. The policy would charge only the 100 largest historical emitters of carbon dioxide, Exxon, BP, Shell, Saudi Ramco, etc... These multinational corporations will still have to compete to sell their oil in markets with smaller distributors who are not subject to this payment. If Exxon chose to pass the cost of this payment onto the price of its product, it would not be able to find any buyers because their competitors who didn't pay would have a lower asking price. In this way, HB 0915 ensures these funds come directly from the shareholder profit of giant fossil fuel companies and nowhere else.

Maryland is faced with a pressing question: who will pay for the costs incurred by the climate crisis? If the legislature takes no action, these costs will be borne by taxpayers, however if the Maryland legislature passes HB 0915, these costs will be paid for by the shareholders of the fossil fuel companies who knowingly caused this crisis.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report.