

Bill Title: HB0128 Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

To: Economic Matters Committee

From: MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice-chair Crosby, and the members of the Economic Matters Committee,

The MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup is submitting this **testimony in support of HB0128 Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025**. We, the undersigned, are a table of community organizations that work together to build power for people-centered environmental justice solutions that dismantle structural racism through environmental and climate initiatives.

As we experience human-induced climate change primarily driven by the burning of fossil fuels, Black and brown communities disproportionately bear the impact of extreme weather events. Due to historic systemic inequities, such as redlining and de jure segregation which continue to impact our lives today, our communities find themselves in geographical locations prone to flooding and in areas with substandard infrastructure that are less resilient to extreme weather. These are often high risk areas that are highly polluted and cause wide-spread negative health impacts.

Addressing the impacts of climate change on communities of color takes an intentional investment in resilient infrastructure and climate solutions. The RENEW Act would allow Maryland to collect revenue to support critical investments in equity programs that alleviate the burden experiences in communities of color including but not limited to:

1. Medicaid;
2. the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities;
3. the Resiliency Hub Grant Program for LMI communities;
4. the DHCD WholeHome weatherization program;
5. for the Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities;
6. to expand the Overburdened and Underserved Communities staff at MDE;
7. to expand the EmPOWER Maryland Program staffing.

As Maryland faces a budget deficit, it is imperative that Marylanders, especially low-income Black and brown communities, do not bear the financial burden brought on by “human-induced” climate change. Rather the largest most polluting fossil fuel companies in the world should pay for the consequences that this *corporate* induced climate change is causing. It is imperative that our state not leave Black and brown Marylanders behind as the climate crisis worsens. The RENEW Act allows us to dedicate specific funding to climate change mitigation and adaptation programs in the state. For this reason, the MD Grassroots EJ Workgroup urges a favorable report on HB0128.

Endorsing Organizations

The Maryland Just Power Alliance (Action In Montgomery (AIM), People Acting Together in Howard (PATH), Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT))

Black Girls Vote

CASA

Centro de Apoyo Familiar

Interfaith Power and Light (DC.MD.NoVA)

Out for Justice

Progressive Maryland