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**Testimony in Support of HB 128 – Responding to Emergency Needs from
Extreme Weather – (RENEW) Act of 2025**

**Before a Joint Meeting of Economic Matters and Environment and
Transportation Committees**

January 23, 2025

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Members of the Economic Matters Committee, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. I am a volunteer for the Chesapeake Climate Action Network, and I urge a favorable report on HB0128. Passing the RENEW Act will relieve Maryland taxpayers of much of the financial burden of adapting to climate change and help the state address our budget shortfall without making any Marylanders pay an additional cent in taxes or energy costs.

Right now, extreme weather events are driving up costs for Marylanders and contributing to the state budget crisis. As I write this testimony, I am in Southern California visiting my son and seeing firsthand the power of heat, wind, and dry air to exacerbate forest fires.

Why should Maryland taxpayers be on the hook for billions of dollars in climate-related mitigation costs when giant corporations profited fraudulently by selling a dangerous product?

The biggest fossil fuel companies lied for decades in an effort to confuse the public and deny the dangers of increasing atmospheric carbon emission. They also exaggerated whatever efforts they did make to adopt renewable energy sources. Going forward, they will have the enormous power of artificial intelligence to invent new ways to confuse and divide the public.

The public can neutralize their advantage with this type of legislation. NY and Vermont have already passed similar bills, and the Polluters Pay Act has been introduced into the Senate by our own Senator Van Hollen.

The RENEW Act shifts costs from Maryland taxpayers to fossil fuel companies in order to protect Marylanders from escalating costs of climate change impacts such as saltwater intrusion, intense rain events, extreme heat, and the public health impacts associated with these types of events. Although we are the 19th most populous state and the 42nd largest state by land mass, Maryland [ranks 9th](#) in the United States by length of

shoreline. We thus have a greater-than-average potential for harm from sea level rise. The bill contains provisions that will prevent the costs of the fees imposed on fossil fuel companies from being borne by consumers.

We are currently facing a structural budget deficit. Climate change can and will impose new and increasing costs on State government. The RENEW act will be a sensible measure to avoid negative impacts on the taxpayers and the State budget. I, therefore, urge a favorable report.