



**HB 128- RESPONDING TO EMERGENCY NEEDS FROM EXTREME WEATHER  
TESTIMONY OF BRITTANY BAKER, MARYLAND POLICY DIRECTOR AT THE  
CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK**

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Economic Matters and Environment and Transportation Committees,

We cannot ignore the fact that the effects of climate change are increasing every day in Maryland.<sup>1</sup> Severe flooding, intense heat waves, saltwater intrusion, and major storms pose a dangerous threat to the wellbeing of the state. Right now, it is Maryland citizens who are footing the bill to deal with the extreme weather events caused by climate change. The RENEW Act provides a solution that protects residents from these escalating costs. The bill would bring in billions of dollars that will be used to prepare and respond to the escalating impacts of climate change.

Instead of Marylanders paying this cost, HB128 would charge fossil fuel companies responsible for over 1 billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions between 1994-2023 with a one-time fee that will contribute to the new Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Fund, established by this bill. None of the companies who will pay this one time fee are based in Maryland; however, they all have sufficient nexus with the state to meet the legal requirements of strict liability. The bill has three parts. First, the Comptroller in consultation with other Departments will study the cost impacts of climate change in the state. Then, the largest, most polluting fossil fuel companies will be notified of their proportional cost recovery demands which will be calculated based on their greenhouse gas emissions during the liability period (the most polluting companies will be charged the highest assessments). Lastly, once the funds are collected, they will be distributed to eligible projects as identified in the qualified expenditure section of the bill. The fund will not only focus on the issue of important infrastructure upgrades for extreme weather preparedness, but also public health, transportation, disaster preparedness, fuel switching, and other resilience measures across the state.

There is broad public support for this policy. US Senator Van Hollen was the first to introduce this policy approach in Congress. New York state and Vermont have both passed similar legislation in the past year. 71% of Marylanders support the RENEW Act<sup>2</sup> and the bill has been endorsed by 44 organizations.

The most important aspect of this bill is that this one time assessment, on the small subset of fossil fuel companies who are the largest and most polluting, cannot be passed onto Maryland consumers. The bill will help Maryland solve its budget deficit without taking more out of the pockets of taxpayers. The RENEW Act is both fiscally responsible and necessary to safeguard the most vulnerable people and regions of our state from climate change.<sup>3</sup>

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB128.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://climateintegrity.org/uploads/media/CCI-Maryland-ImpactsAndCosts-2024.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Maryland State Polling conducted by Gonzales Polls in January 2025.

<sup>3</sup> [https://policyintegrity.org/files/publications/Polluter\\_Pays\\_Policy\\_Brief\\_v2.pdf](https://policyintegrity.org/files/publications/Polluter_Pays_Policy_Brief_v2.pdf)