



**Testimony Supporting HB 128
House Economic Matters Committee
January 23rd, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of congregations across Maryland working together through Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVa), I respectfully request a **favorable report** on **HB 128, the Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act**.

All of our traditions require those who cause harm to take responsibility and make amends. A few industrial polluters bear most of the responsibility for burning of fossil fuels that has damaged our climate. But so far, Maryland's vulnerable neighbors and communities being harmed by climate change are being left to manage these harms alone.

The climate impacts of pollution are being felt locally by Marylanders now. Our coastal communities are seeing unprecedented levels of flooding and once in a generation storms happening more and more often. In our homes, gas burning appliances have led to increased levels of asthma in young children and COPD complications in older adults. Across the state, labor workers are working in extreme temperatures in both summer and winter. Meanwhile, the biggest polluters who bear the responsibility for these extreme events are not being held accountable.

Passing HB 128 is about accountability, but it is also about preparedness. We can no longer put off the work to mitigate climate impacts in our state. And just as the costs of climate mitigation shouldn't be borne by communities alone, it also should not fall to Maryland taxpayers. This bill would require polluters themselves to help fund necessary work to undertake physical mitigation, address health disparities, and meet our state climate goals while ensuring our most vulnerable neighbors are adequately equipped during this transition.

Communities of faith across the state have long spoken up in protection of our common home and our neighbors. Now more than ever, we call on our state leaders to practice strong leadership and do the

same. The RENEW Act provides the resources necessary to get this done in an equitable and just way and it will need the support of this committee.

We know that the corporations that profited by damaging our climate for so many decades will not cheerfully pay their share of the cost of addressing climate harms in Maryland. Implementing the RENEW Act is going to be a fight, and we believe it is a righteous fight on behalf of so many Marylanders who will need our protection to face rising seas in a damaged climate. This is a moment for bold action to do right by the communities you represent.

Today, our faith communities are raising our voices to hold polluters responsible for the climate damage they have caused in Maryland. The costs of damaging our climate should be borne by the polluters who profited by burning fossil fuels, not by our communities. For this reason, **we urge a favorable report on HB 128.**