

HB0128 - SUPPORT

Susy Cheston
7117 Sycamore Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
Susy.cheston@gmail.com
202-549-3656

HB 128- Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025

Joint Meeting of Economic Matters and Environment and Transportation Committee

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,

As a longtime Maryland resident and volunteer with CCAN, I urge a favorable report on HB0128.

This is a really rough budget year for Maryland. As a taxpayer, I don't want to bear the financial burden of adapting to climate change. I urge you to pass the RENEW Act, so the polluters will pay for the mess they've made rather than people like me.

Driving between Route 50 and the Navy Stadium, you cross Weems Creek, where my sister lives with her husband in the house he grew up in. If you look high up in the trees around their house, you can see the shredded remains of a toddler wading pool as well as insulation that blew there from a house 2 miles away. This debris was deposited there by the EF-2 tornado in September 2021 that ripped through Annapolis with peak wind speeds about 125 mph. It's too high for the tree service to remove, so it serves as a permanent reminder of the damage that Annapolis.gov calls "a disaster the likes of which the city had rarely seen."

Growing up in Annapolis, tornadoes were unheard of. But climate change has made the unthinkable happen all over the country, and Maryland is no exception.

Who pays for the clean-up and repairs? Government? Insurance companies, which pass on the costs through higher premiums? Individual homeowners? Luckily, my sister had good homeowner's insurance that covered the cost of the damage when the rains poured into her house after the tornado sent a tree through her roof, as well as the cost of removing a devastating number of fallen oak trees. But as we see in California today, many insurance companies increasingly decline to cover climate-related damage such as from fire and floods.

The RENEW Act shifts costs from Maryland taxpayers to fossil fuel companies in order to protect Marylanders from the escalating costs of climate change impacts such as saltwater intrusion, intense rain events, flooding, extreme heat, and the public health impacts associated with these types of events. It provides taxpayer relief in a year when Maryland's budgets are hard hit.

Please be loyal to Marylanders who are bearing the brunt of climate change and not to fossil fuel companies that helped bring about the climate disasters that are becoming so shockingly frequent and severe.

If you believe ordinary Marylanders aren't affected, come look at the remains of the wading pool high up in an oak tree just off Rowe Boulevard.

Thank you,

Susy Cheston