



**Maryland Office**  
2901 E. Baltimore St  
Baltimore, MD 21214

January 21, 2025

**To:** Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Members of the Economic Matters Committee, & Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

**From:** Jim Brown, Policy Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic

**Subject: Favorable Testimony for Maryland HB 128- Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025**

Audubon Mid-Atlantic submits this testimony in support of House Bill 128 – The RENEW Act. Audubon Mid-Atlantic is the regional office of National Audubon Society, representing over 35,000 Marylanders who advocate for the protection of birds, bird habitat, and policies aiming to protect both birds and human communities in the face of increasing environmental challenges, habitat loss, pollution, and climate change.

The RENEW Act supports critical investments in necessary programs funding health, infrastructure, equity, and urgent climate change mitigation and adaptation projects. Passing the RENEW Act will provide relief to Maryland taxpayers from the financial burden of adapting to climate change and help the state address our budget shortfall without making Marylanders pay additional taxes or increased energy costs.

Extreme weather events not only increase costs for Maryland residents and for state government investments in infrastructure, but they also cause expensive and catastrophic damage to Maryland’s natural resources and critical bird habitat. These same climate change related weather events are harming the state’s ability to be prepared for the impacts of climate change. Extreme flooding, severe storms, and drought are harming our forests and riparian buffers. Flooding and sea-level rise are causing Maryland’s coastal marshes to disappear, taking with them the protective buffer communities rely on from flooding and storm surges. When the marshes disappear, they also take with them habitat for species such as the threatened saltmarsh sparrow – a globally significant bird species – which relies on Maryland’s disappearing salt marshes for breeding and survival.

Science tells us birds are in decline due to habitat loss resulting climate change. 1/3 of all Maryland bird species experienced significant population declines in the past 50 years. HB 128 will enable Maryland to invest in habitat restoration, protect priceless natural climate solutions, and support environmental justice initiatives. The co-benefits of enhanced quality of life, improved public health, and investments in local economies that sill support Marylanders in every corner of the state

We support The RENEW Act's intention to shift costs from Maryland taxpayers to fossil fuel companies in order to protect Marylanders and Maryland's birds from the escalating costs of climate change impacts such as habitat loss, saltwater intrusion, extreme rain events, flooding, extreme heat, and the public health impacts associated with these types of events. HB 128 will lay the foundation for investing in more climate-resilient communities for our residents and visitors. It will also continue to hold Maryland up as a leader in climate action, environmental conservation, and the protection of birds now and in the future.

Audubon Mid-Atlantic respectfully urges a favorable review of this legislation.

Thank You,

Jim Brown

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