



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0149

**Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act
Education, Energy and the Environment Committee and
Finance Committee**

FAVORABLE

TO: Sen. Brian J. Feldman, Chair; Sen. Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice-Chair; and the Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee; and

TO: Sen. Pamela Beidle, Chair; Sen. Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair; and the Members of the Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 11, 2025

The Episcopal Church believes that global climate change is not only a scientific concern or environmental issue, but what the United Nations calls "the defining issue of our time... at a defining moment" (UN Secretary General, September 10, 2018).

The Episcopal Church is committed to advocating for and supporting legislation that directly addresses climate change's impacts on environmental justice communities.

Our General Convention affirms that no community, especially communities living in poverty, those who live closest to the land in subsistence cultures, and members of marginalized ethnic groups, should bear the heaviest burden of environmental pollution or degradation.

The costs of dealing with climate change and extreme weather events are already here. Ellicott City alone has had two "1,000-year storms" in the last two years, and Howard County is currently planning to spend \$228 million to help protect the city's residents from future flooding. The RENEW Act correctly places the burden of resourcing public relief for extreme weather catastrophes on the shoulders of companies that can be shown to have contributed to the problem, defined in the Act as those who have emitted more than a billion tons of greenhouse gas emissions between 1994 and 2023 and who have sufficient connection with Maryland.

The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland urges the competent Committees to support the RENEW Act, in order to protect overburdened and underserved communities from bearing the costs of extreme weather events they had no role in creating.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.