



SB0149 - SUPPORT
Frances Stewart, MD
Elders Climate Action Maryland
frances.stewart6@gmail.com
301-718-0446

SB0149 – Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW)
Act

Meeting of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 13, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge a favorable report on SB0149, the RENEW Act.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

Each day, we see the climate crisis more clearly. We know that Maryland is at risk for sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, flooding from intense rainfall, heat waves, and other extreme weather events. These events will become increasingly common in the years to come, and state and local governments must respond.

For example, Annapolis is spending over \$50 million to upgrade their dock because of flooding. Howard County is spending over \$228 million to prevent flooding in Ellicott City. Every area in the state will be burdened by similar expenses. The costs of adaptation and disaster relief will continue to rise as the climate crisis continues.

Currently, taxpayers are footing the bill for all of this. In a time of constrained budgets, this is unsustainable. It is also unfair. The largest part of the responsibility

for the climate crisis lies with the fossil fuel companies who have deceived the public for decades while making immense profits.

The RENEW Act shifts these costs from Maryland taxpayers to the large fossil fuel companies. The state is directed to do an analysis of what it will cost Maryland to adapt to these impacts and then require large out-of-state fossil fuel companies to pay that amount to the state. The one-time payment will only apply to companies responsible for more than one billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions between 1994 and 2023. None of those companies are based in Maryland.

This one-time fee would be treated by the companies as a fixed cost in a competitive market and are not expected to increase the [price of gasoline](#) or other [costs for consumers](#).

Those funds will be used for climate adaptation and resilience in a variety of area including infrastructure, schools, agriculture, public health, and disaster preparedness across the state.

This is a relatively new approach, but Maryland would not be the first state to take this route. Vermont and New York have already passed similar legislation. California, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia, and Massachusetts are also considering legislation. On the Federal level, Senator Van Hollen recently reintroduced his “climate superfund” bill in the current Congress.

For all of these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on SB0149.