

**SB149 - SUPPORT**  
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**SB 149- Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW)  
Act of 2025**

Joint Meeting of Education, Energy, and the Environment and Finance  
Committees February 13, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee.

I urge a favorable report on SB149, the Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025. Maryland will experience increasingly severe consequences of climate change. This cannot be avoided. But who should pay for those consequences: the citizens of Maryland or the fossil-fuel companies that knowingly and recklessly generated the greenhouse gases that cause global warming? Passing the RENEW Act will relieve Maryland taxpayers of the financial burden of adapting to climate change while helping the state address our budget shortfall without making any Marylanders pay an additional cent in taxes or energy costs.

I am proud to have been a resident of Montgomery County for just short of 40 years. One of the things that makes me proud to be a Marylander is our state's political good sense and legislative leadership. In recent years, the burgeoning climate crisis has been a paramount concern to me, and for that reason I have long been a member of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN).

My concerns about global warming are both moral and practical. Moral, because I deeply believe that we have an obligation to take care of the planet that sustains us, and in particular not to despoil it in ways that cause consequences that are unjustly distributed among existing communities and foisted upon future generations. My wife and I used to lament the fact that my daughters are disinclined to give us grandchildren, but now we are, frankly, relieved- because we dread the idea that they would be born into a world of rising oceans and savage storms and the political disruptions to which those will foreseeably lead.

My practical concerns are that we are inadequately prepared to deal with the calamitous natural changes that are already inevitable due to existing rates of global warming.

The RENEW Act is a well-constructed legislation that will go far toward dealing with these concerns. Right now, extreme weather events are driving up costs for Marylanders and contributing to the state budget crisis. Annapolis is spending over \$50 million to contend with chronic flooding, Baltimore City is paying to install air conditioning in public schools like City College because of hotter weather, Howard County is spending over \$228 million to combat flooding in Ellicott City, and similar costs afflict nearly every jurisdiction across the state.

These costs cannot be walked away from; the only question is how we will pay for them. They are currently borne by Maryland taxpayers, even though they are a direct and (as has been amply demonstrated) *foreseen* result of actions taken by the fossil fuel industry, which has been able to write them off as externalities.

The RENEW relieves taxpayers of this financial burden and forces out-of-state fossil fuel companies to pay for the cost of adapting to climate change. Further, it prevents those companies from passing those costs on to consumers.

The bill directs the state to conduct an analysis of how much anthropogenic climate impacts are costing Maryland, then directs the state to require the largest out-of-state fossil fuel companies to pay that amount to Maryland. The one-time payment will only apply to companies that have emitted more than \$1 billion tons of carbon cumulatively between 1994 and 2023. That is a short list of companies, none of which are based in Maryland. The payments would create a climate mitigation and adaptation fund that would support dedicated investments in climate resilience across the state and across issue areas including health, infrastructure, fuel switching, schools, and disaster preparedness.

A growing number of states have recognized the wisdom of this approach. New York and Vermont have passed similar legislation, and California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Virginia are considering doing so. Senator Van Hollen has reintroduced a similarly structured federal bill. Let's not allow Maryland to fall behind on this, perhaps the most crucial crisis of our time.