



**Testimony to the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
SB149 Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025
Position: Favorable**

January 23, 2025

The Honorable Chair Feldman

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

2 West Miller Senate Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

cc: Members, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Honorable Chair Feldman and members of the committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights, equity and housing justice for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland. I am writing in strong support of SB149, the RENEW Act of 2025, which would hold the businesses that extract fossil fuels, and achieve enormous profits doing so, accountable for the costs of climate disasters.

It is an unavoidable truth that climate change is exacerbating natural disasters and their impact. From California wildfires to Asheville under water, it is clear that nowhere is safe from the devastating impacts of climate disaster. The time to prepare for such kinds of disasters is now. We need to hold fossil fuel companies responsible for their impact on the environment and ensure that taxpayers are not fully on the line for covering the cost of repair when we inevitably face a climate disaster.

In respect to concerns related to consumer pass through, holding the largest, most polluting fossil fuel companies accountable for these costs through a one-time fee proportional to their historical emissions will not have a consumer impact.

These costs cannot be passed on to consumers for several reasons:

- The price of gas is not connected to oil prices. Oil prices are set by a global market.

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- This assessment will be a one-time fixed cost that would not raise the price of production. Prices of goods and services are only increased when the ongoing price of production is increased.
- This assessment will only apply to some companies- the largest, most polluting companies. This small subset of companies would not be able to raise their prices because companies choose their prices based on what competitors are charging- not just their own costs. There will still be fossil fuel companies who are not being held liable by the legislation.
- The total assessments to each company will be nominal compared to their overall revenues. The largest, most polluting fossil fuel companies have revenues of millions, billions, and trillions of dollars per year. The assessment will not only be a small portion of their yearly revenue, but will be due over a 10 year period.

The Institute for Policy Integrity’s 2022 report, “Enacting the ‘Polluter Pays’ Principle, explains these key points in great detail. The report can be found at this [link](#). Although the report analyzes the principle from a New York context, the economic principles still apply to other states as long as their legislation is significantly similar to New York’s Climate Superfund bill.

For these reasons, we urge your favorable report on SB149

Best,

Zoe Gallager,
Policy Associate

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