



SUPPORT for SB149

2/6/2025

Dear Chair Feldman and esteemed members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee,

On behalf of ShoreRivers, I am writing to express our **strong support for HB128, the Responding to Emergency Needs from Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act of 2025**. As a science-based advocacy and restoration organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the waterways of Maryland's Eastern Shore, we urge a favorable report on this critical legislation.

Extreme weather events are increasingly jeopardizing the health of our rivers, local economies, and the communities we serve. **The Eastern Shore of Maryland alone is losing more than 580 acres of land annually** to erosion exacerbated by mean sea level rise. Rising sea levels, saltwater intrusion, increased flooding, and more frequent and intense storms threaten the Chesapeake Bay watershed and impose mounting costs on Marylanders. Currently, these costs—totaling hundreds of millions of dollars statewide—are borne by taxpayers. **HB128 offers a fair and necessary solution by shifting this financial burden from Maryland families and businesses to the large, out-of-state fossil fuel companies that have played a primary role in driving climate change.**

The RENEW Act will:

- Require an analysis of climate-related costs impacting Maryland communities and ecosystems.
- Ensure that large fossil fuel companies—those responsible for over a billion tons of cumulative carbon emissions—contribute to the costs of climate adaptation in Maryland.
- Provide crucial funding for infrastructure improvements, flood mitigation, saltwater intrusion management, disaster preparedness, and public health protections—without increasing taxes or energy costs for Marylanders.
- Support investments in climate resilience, benefiting our local environment, schools, and public health systems.

As an organization committed to clean water, environmental justice, and community resilience, ShoreRivers recognizes that climate change directly affects our ability to achieve our mission. We have seen firsthand the devastating effects of rising waters, increased nutrient pollution from extreme rainfall, and damage to critical oyster and wetland restoration projects—challenges that will only intensify without immediate action.

States like New York and Vermont have already taken similar action, and others—including California, Minnesota, New Jersey, Virginia, and Massachusetts—are considering comparable policies. It is time for Maryland to lead in protecting its residents, environment, and economy from the escalating impacts of climate change.

ShoreRivers

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director
Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper
Ben Ford, Miles Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

We urge the committee to issue a favorable finding for HB128 and ensure that those most responsible for climate change contribute to the solutions Maryland needs. Thank you for your leadership in addressing this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Ford', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Benjamin Ford, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper, on behalf of ShoreRivers