

My name is Jeffrey Johnson and I live near Reisterstown in Senate District 10. I am a volunteer with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Fund, and a co-founder of the Chesapeake Earth Holders Community, which is a member of the Interfaith Power and Light network of faith based congregations. I am presenting written testimony in support of the RENEW Act-SB 149.

I am a 75 year old, retired person living in a 125 year old farm house in a rural part of Baltimore County. I am very concerned with the impact of extreme weather events on my home and my surrounding community. My home is currently in great need of upgrades to prepare for extreme weather events. During the frigid temperatures of this past month my wife and I were not able to keep warm due to the high winds and poor insulation and insufficient heat in our older home. Our property was built for an earlier time and needs considerable investment in weather proofing and a new heating system to make it habitable in the future. This is true for many homes in my area which continue to use heating oil and propane for heating and cooking. The costs of these fossil fuels are increasing rapidly and we will be paying thousands of dollars to keep our house warm enough to live in this winter. The RENEW Act will provide resources to help us prepare for even more extreme weather events in the future.

I realize that I and other taxpayers have been paying out of our pockets to prepare for the impact of climate change on our homes and our communities. Without the RENEW ACT we will not have the resources to continue paying for the necessary upgrades on our property. The RENEW act will also provide resources at the State and County level for the very expensive infrastructure projects that will become increasingly necessary in the future as the weather becomes more extreme.

The RENEW ACT puts much of the financial burden for these preparations on the biggest international fossil fuel companies that have emitted billions of tons of green house gases. In my view it is only right to hold these companies responsible for the damage they have done to our environment. This approach has been successfully applied in other states and will help provide the resources needed to invest in the critical infrastructure we need to protect Maryland now and into the future.

I would like to thank Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee, and the members of this committee for considering my sincere request to support the RENEW Act, Senate Bill 149.