



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 340 Climate Change - Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council

TO: Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Chair, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate, Climate Change Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
DATE: February 11, 2025

Heavier rains, higher tides, and record heat are damaging lives and infrastructure across Maryland today. **HB 340 Climate Change - Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council** will make the necessary investments to prepare for—and recover from—worsening extreme weather events. This is why the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports this legislation.

Right now, taxpayers across Maryland are paying the costs of climate change—which are adding up and contributing to the state’s projected budget shortfall—while large, out-of-state fossil fuel companies are reaping all the benefits. This bill would bring new revenue into the state—without making a single Marylander pay an additional cent—by charging these companies a one time penalty for their historical emissions.

We can’t afford NOT to support this bill.

The UULM-MD is a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs.

We know that Global Climate Change impacts marginalized communities first and worst, AND investments in those communities for climate resilience and adaptation are last. The bill will ensure that forty percent of all the investments are required to go to overburdened, underserved communities, as defined by the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022.

In order to protect the people and places that Marylanders hold dear, the state must make necessary infrastructure investments to adapt to these new extremes. These investments will make Maryland a cleaner, more resilient, and more affordable place to live. They will create

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd www.Twitter.com/uulmmd

jobs and help prevent disasters from ruining homes and workspaces. HB 340 will provide the funds to make these necessary investments. It would raise \$900 million a year for 10 years and provide the dollars the state needs to build new drainage systems, upgrade HVACs in public buildings, recover when disaster strikes, and much more.

To survive climate change, Maryland needs new revenue. Governor Moore has stated that Maryland needs \$1B per year for mitigation, resilience, and adaptation. HB 340 can provide these necessary funds without making Marylanders bear the financial burden. Failure to adopt the bill is effectively a steadily increasing tax on Marylanders to pay for the impacts of Climate Change. Maryland should waste no time in passing this bill and collecting funds from out of state energy companies and investing those funds in building a better Maryland.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate, Climate Change UULM-MD

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

www.uulmmd.org info@uulmmd.org www.facebook.com/uulmmd www.Twitter.com/uulmmd