



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

HB0340 - Climate Change - Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council

Hearing Date: February 11, 2025

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Ruth

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Submitting: Liz Feighner for HoCo Climate Action

Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

We strongly urge you to **vote favorably on HB0340** that authorizes Maryland's Attorney General to sue major fossil fuel companies for their role in causing - and misleading the public about - climate change. The bill also authorizes the Attorney General to hire outside counsel to assist with an action as needed. Finally, the bill establishes the Climate Change Restitution Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund and a Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council to provide advice on the distribution of the Fund.

As an organization based in Howard County, we are all too aware that extreme weather events are destroying homes and lives in Maryland. Climate-related damages are draining taxpayer dollars at an unsustainable rate:

- \$228M and rising for flood prevention in Ellicott City.
- \$84M for tidal protection in Annapolis.
- \$950K annually for stormwater infrastructure in St. Mary's County.

The fossil fuel industry knew over 50 years ago that their products were fueling climate catastrophes, yet they chose to protect their profits by engaging in decades of denial and deceit, casting public doubt on the very science they knew to be true. This issue is strikingly similar to what we saw with tobacco and opioids.

It ensures that the companies responsible for climate damage contribute to the solutions rather than shifting the burden onto Maryland taxpayers. Just as states held Big Tobacco accountable, we must do the same with the fossil fuel industry.

The governor just announced that the proposed budget will redirect funds originally meant for renewable energy initiatives to help patch the nearly \$3 billion budget deficit. Passing this bill is critical to fund climate protection projects that cannot be delayed. "Winning Slowly Is the Same as Losing" ~ Bill McKibben.

We urge a **favorable vote on HB0340**.

Howard County Climate Action

Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee

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