



HB340 - Climate Change - Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council

**TESTIMONY OF BRITTANY BAKER, MARYLAND POLICY DIRECTOR AT THE
CHESAPEAKE CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK**

Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee,

Maryland has been seeing an increase in the devastating effects of climate change for years, but recently the state has been hit with even worse heat waves, flooding, and storms. HB340 will authorize the state's Attorney General to investigate, prosecute, or defend any suit or action that holds entities accountable for tortious or unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change. The bill makes sure that inaction or deception on the part of these entities is included under tortious behavior. Coal and gas companies have known for decades the damage that fossil fuels can do to the environment and it's time to make polluters pay for the damage they have caused.

Furthermore, HB340 calls for the creation of The Change Restitution Fund. All revenue received by the state from judgements or settlements will be added to the fund, which will be used to supplement state programs that mitigate, prevent, or repair damages caused by climate change. These programs will primarily focus on addressing flooding, storm damage, intense heatwaves, droughts, and ecosystem changes.

The distribution of the funds will be decided by The Climate Change Restitution Advisory Council, which will consist of members of the General Assembly, State Secretaries, and representatives from Maryland stakeholder organizations. This collective represents a wide range of interests relating to climate change and will allow for a full discussion and decision on where to allocate funding. The Advisory Council will also be responsible for providing informational briefings to the Governor, The General Assembly, and The Attorney General on climate change and the allocation of revenue in the Fund.

We must hold fossil fuel companies accountable for their actions and contributions to climate change.

I respectfully request a favorable report on HB340.