



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## House Bill 340

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

Date: February 11, 2025

To: Health & Government Operations Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Matt Stegman,  
Maryland Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 340, which would authorize the Attorney General to engage in legal actions that hold large polluters accountable for their contributions to damages caused by climate change. The bill also establishes a Climate Change Restitution Fund to receive any damages from suits brought under the bill and establishes an Advisory Council to help guide use of the fund.

The reality of climate change is very visible to those living on the Bay. Smith Island and Tangier Island are inhabited islands in the mid-Bay whose residents are already losing their homes to sea-level rise. Other previously inhabited islands, such as Sharp's Island and Holland's Island, are completely submerged. We are seeing more powerful storms increasing water pollution from runoff and stream erosion, higher temperatures putting species at risk and changing both water chemistry and underwater vegetation (warmer water holds less oxygen, and also reduces some species of underwater grasses), and rising sea levels causing dangerous flooding.

Left unchecked, climate change threatens Bay recovery, our economy, and our very existence. HB 340 will put Maryland on equal footing with states, counties, and municipalities across the country that have taken action against the fossil fuel industry to hold them accountable. Damages recovered under actions taken pursuant to the bill will provide crucial funding for climate resiliency initiatives.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 340.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.