

MARYLAND RETAILERS ALLIANCE

The Voice of Retailing in Maryland



**HB340 Climate Change - Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council Health and Government Operations Committee
February 11th, 2025**

Position: Unfavorable

Background: HB340 would authorize the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any suit or action that holds certain entities accountable for tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change.

Comments: The Maryland Retailers Alliance (MRA) has serious concerns about the overly broad language in and potential impact of **HB340 Climate Change – Attorney General Actions, Climate Change Restitution Fund, and Climate Change Restitution Fund Advisory Council Health and Government Operations Committee**. The bill would authorize the Attorney General to pursue action against specific industry entities that have committed any “tortious” conduct, including inaction, that could have contributed in any way to climate change. This authorization is extremely broad and creates liability concerns for businesses for simply conducting basic operations. The lack of guidance for businesses or enumeration of activities that could result in investigation or legal action is a major issue for businesses that operate in Maryland and could be impacted by this legislation without any knowledge of wrongdoing.

HB340 also presents a revenue issue for the State through allowing the Attorney General to hire outside counsel to assist with lawsuits resulting from this proposal. Given the current budgetary outlook facing the State, it would be unwise to spend additional State funds outside of the regular operational expenditures of the Office of the Attorney General in pursuit of a potentially large and, as of yet, unknown number of claims that could result from the passage of this very broad legislation.

For these reasons, MRA would urge an unfavorable report on HB340. Thank you for your consideration.