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Written Testimony of Darryl Barnes in Support of HB 903
Courts – Global Warming and Climate Change – Prohibited Actions
(Ratepayer Protection Act of 2025)

Good afternoon, Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name Darryl Barnes, Barnes International and I am here to support HB 903, Courts-Global Warming and Climate Change – Prohibited Actions (Ratepayer Protection Act of 2025).

HB 903 will prohibit the State or local government, or an agency of the State or a local government, from filing an action for monetary damages or alleged economic damages against a business for the adverse effects of global warming or climate change in the State. The U.S. Supreme Court has already made clear through previous decisions that individual companies cannot be held liable for the local effects of climate change, which is a global challenge and one more appropriately for regulators and Congress to address. Punishing energy producers – whose totally legal products Marylanders require to run our businesses and raise our families – for alleged climate-related impacts is not just an unhelpful approach, it's also illogical. As one of my predecessors in the Maryland House of Delegates and former member of Congress, Al Wynn, recently said: "Flooding in the nearby harbor area of Annapolis, Maryland, was likely the result of climate change, but it would be foolhardy to suggest it was the fault of a particular company or industry." If public officials continue down this path, we will simply raise energy costs for our constituents, who are already bracing for increases to their monthly bills – as high as \$18 per month – due to power plant closures and an aging power grid system. According to Baltimore Gas and Electric, this adds up to an 11% monthly hit to Maryland household budgets. In addition, with less energy supply available due to companies diverting resources away from production because of potential legal damage, energy costs only stand to increase. The last thing these families need is another unnecessary cost on top of this – one that can be prevented by this legislation.

By allowing the lawsuits, they are likely going to fail in higher courts, and risk energy bill spikes. For these reasons, I ask for a **FAVAVORABLE** report.

