



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 903

Courts - Global Warming and Climate Change - Prohibited Actions (Ratepayer Protection Act of 2025)

Date: February 27, 2025
To: Judiciary Committee

Position: **UNFAVORABLE**
From: Matt Stegman,
Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** House Bill 903, which would prohibit State or local governments and their agencies from filing an action for monetary damages for the adverse effects of climate change.

The reality of climate change is very visible to those living on the Chesapeake 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. Areas on the Western Shore, notably areas like Baltimore City and Ellicott City as examples, have seen their stormwater infrastructure overwhelmed by more powerful and voluminous storms causing significant flooding. 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. In response, local governments across the watershed have sought to hold historical polluters accountable. HB 903 would take a tool out of the State and local governments' tool belts to address the urgent realities of climate change.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on HB 903.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at 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.