

Climate Crime Accountability Bill Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryan Dunning

Position: FAV



February 10, 2026

**Testimony of Bryan Dunning
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Progressive Reform**

**Before the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Requesting a Favorable Report on SB0432: Attorney General Actions and Climate
Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Dear Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and the members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

The Center for Progressive Reform is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization that prioritizes equity and justice for communities impacted by climate and environmental harms. The Center is strongly supportive of the civil justice system being utilized to ensure that individuals or organizations that inflict harms upon communities through criminal and tortious actions are held responsible for remedying the harm. As such, and for the following reasons, the Center respectfully requests a *favorable* reading on SB0432.

Scope and Purpose

This bill directs the Maryland Attorney General to pursue litigation against polluters who have, through their actions and *conduct*, contributed to the climate crisis and [inflicted substantial](#) injury to Maryland communities to date.¹ As the state moves forward with the study authorized by the RENEW Act, this number will grow. This bill directs the Attorney General to ensure that these damages are allocated to the responsible parties – specifically publicly traded entities with a market capitalization greater than one trillion dollars, which is engaged in extracting, refining, or processing of coal, oil, gas who have engaged in tortious or otherwise unlawful behavior. Notably, this bill is distinct from a climate superfund bill (such as RENEW if passed into an enforceable action following the

¹ The Maryland Office of the Comptroller estimates this cost to be between ten and twenty billion dollars just from 85 identified severe weather events between 1980 and 2024.

results of the study), which would be based in strict-liability for the cleanup/mitigation of the harm, as it looks to the *conduct* of the polluting entities – including fraud and deception.

Litigation brought under the direction of this bill has [numerous successful antecedents](#), including the 1990s tobacco cases, PFAS litigation in the 2000s through present, and opioid litigation. In these instances, as in the instance of the litigation contemplated under SB0432, at root was not merely the direct harm caused by the defendants' products, but the intentional deception as to the safety of their products. Holding polluters responsible for their conduct is critical to ensure they are accountable for the direct harms of climate change Marylanders are now facing, and liable for the damages so that the financial burden of adapting and recovering from those harms must not be borne by Marylanders. Such litigation also bears the benefits of allowing the state to engage in robust discovery to shine a light on the conduct of polluters over past century.

Climate Crimes Accountability Fund

This bill creates a climate crimes accountability fund that will exist as a repository for damages collected by the state from polluters who either settle with the state or are found culpable through trial. Such a fund ensures that the state will responsibly utilize any monies recovered through suit to directly address the harms borne by residents of the state by the conduct of polluters. Such a fund ensures that this bill delivers justice to Maryland communities.²

Processes

This bill removes concerns related to the ability of the Attorney General's office to navigate potential settlements implicated by the Maryland Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCATA).³ The bill exempts litigation arising from this bill from being subject to the UCATA based on the exemption created by 2024's legislation tied to litigation related to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collision and collapse on March 24, 2024.⁴ The rationale here is the same as in the 2024 bill (especially insofar as the initial iteration of that bill would have been a broader exemption from the UCATA for "public welfare actions" including suits against polluters such as PFAS manufacturers), it removes barriers to the state to engage in settlement proceedings by ensuring apportionment in settlements, and limiting concerns related to contribution suits. This maximizes flexibility and settlement negotiation capacity for the Attorney General's office and will broadly reduce costs for suit

² As opposed, for example, to utilization of funds secured by certain states in the 1990 tobacco settlements on expenditures unrelated to the harms suffered by smokers, or smoking cessation activities.

³ MD Code ann. Courts and Judicial Proceedings § 3-1401, *et. seq.*

⁴ Codified at MD Code Ann. State Gov. § 6-106.2

and ensure more equitable outcomes.

In addition to reducing costs to the state, the bill authorizes the State Attorney General's office to hire third-party counsel to support in litigation brought under the bill. The use of private counsel has the benefit of reducing the direct workload placed upon the state attorney's office – reducing costs to the state, as well as flexibility in retaining attorneys who specialize in causes of action brought.

For these reasons, the Center respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB0432.

Sincerely,

Bryan Dunning
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Progressive Reform

SB0432_Climate_Crime_Accountability_Act_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0432

Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Love

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0432 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

For decades, fossil fuel companies withheld and denied evidence that their products were harming the environment. When data was finally released showing their callous disregard for the crisis they had created, they publicly touted that they would 'invest' billions in restoring the environment.

That investment seems to have been in making plastics, which has harmed our environment even more, as well as running campaigns to make us think that natural gas is somehow clean and not a fossil fuel. They have also invested a great deal of money trying to get us to believe that if we can invest in carbon capture methods, they can continue to produce fossil fuels.

Their actions to date have been governed solely by their desire to make as much profit as possible without solving the crisis that is pushing our society towards extinction and has caused property damage, weakened our food system, and caused many, many deaths. It is more than time to call them to account.

This bill will allow the Attorney General to prosecute fossil fuel corporations that are worth more than \$1,000,000,000 and derive at least 50% of their revenues from the production or sale of fossil fuels for the harm they have caused and are continuing to cause. It also establishes the Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to use the monies from any judgements from cases involving the fossil fuel companies to mitigate or repair the harm caused by fossil fuels.

Since these corporations don't seem to be able to make the proper investments in truly solving this crisis, we should be able to take back some of their profits to do what needs to be done.

Our members are very enthusiastic in support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Testimony on Climate Crimes Accountability Act SB4

Uploaded by: Debbie Cohn

Position: FAV

Testimony on: SB432 – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee Members:

I have lived in Bethesda for over 40 years and have adult children and pre-school aged grandchildren who also live in Maryland. The impacts of climate change on Maryland were already widely experienced before my grandchildren were even born. I am concerned about the impact of climate change on their lives. I am concerned about the costs they will have to shoulder as a result of actions by certain large fossil fuel companies. SB432 creates the possibility that to the extent these companies have contributed to climate change in a manner that violates Maryland tort law, Maryland can hold them financially liable for the damages they have caused Maryland residents, businesses and government entities in the state. The Climate Crimes Accountability Act addresses this concern. Accordingly, I urge you to vote favorably on SB432.

Now that the RENEW Act study is going forward to quantify the costs to Maryland resulting from climate change, Maryland will be prepared to consider holding fossil fuel companies responsible for any violations of Maryland tort law. The Attorney General also has the advantage of learning from similar lawsuits brought in other states and local jurisdictions. In that vein, this Committee may want to consider defenses alleged by major fossil fuel companies in those other cases, including the litigation brought by the City of Annapolis, and consult with the Attorney General to determine whether MD Code, State Government §6-106.2(d)(2) is sufficient to allow the Attorney General to expand the parties that could be sued, beyond those specified in SB432 to include, for example, industry trade or research associations.

The Climate Crimes Accountability Act authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, commence, prosecute or defend any action by large fossil fuel companies (market capitalization above \$1 billion) for any unlawful conduct by them that has contributed to climate change. Importantly, SB432 waives Maryland's Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCATA) for actions brought under this bill.¹ Waiving UCATA, which is a minority approach among the states, facilitates settlements with one or more of the parties held responsible for climate damages since the waiver allows for allocation of the recovery among the liable defendants based on each particular defendant's judicially determined share of responsibility. As a result, it facilitates the state's ability to engage in settlement proceedings without risk that [a settlement with less culpable party could limit the amount Maryland could recover from the more culpable parties](#), leaving money on the table. For parties that do not settle and are found culpable, the waiver avoids derivative suits in which the culpable parties determine their relative contribution.

Importantly, SB432 also allows the Attorney General to hire outside counsel, which creates the flexibility of using contingency or hourly fees or a different fee structure and enables the Attorney General to hire attorneys with significant experience in this type of cause of action. With these provisions, SB432 now has the Attorney General's wholehearted support and is one of his high priorities.

¹ See proposed Section 1-307(e) in the bill.

SB432 also creates a separate Climate Crimes Accountability Fund for any recovery from litigation to ensure that the funds are used only to supplement state programs that prevent, mitigate or repair harms caused by climate change. Creating a separate fund mitigates against the temptation by the state to use the recovery funds for unrelated state budget needs. SB432 includes a broad list of adverse climate change effects that the fund could address through different programs. Importantly, these are separate applications of funds than those that might be obtained under the RENEW Act should that act be introduced and enacted in a subsequent session.

To enable Maryland businesses, residents and governmental bodies at all levels potentially to undertake what will likely be extremely expensive actions to prevent, mitigate or repair the harms caused by climate change, we need to ensure that the Attorney General can effectively bring this type of lawsuit. Otherwise, Marylanders will continue to bear these costs alone. Accordingly, I urge this Committee to issue a favorable report on SB432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act.

Testimony

Uploaded by: Donald M. Goldberg

Position: FAV

Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Testimony on: SB0432 Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)
Submitted by: Donald M. Goldberg, Executive Director
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chairman and Co-chair:

Climate Law & Policy Project (CLPP) is a Maryland-based nonprofit research organization that works to develop and promote sound and safe policies to slow, stop, and ultimately reverse the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and ensure that vulnerable communities are protected from climate impacts that cannot be avoided. CLPP supports SB0432.

SB0432 would authorize the Attorney General to investigate or pursue litigation against big fossil fuel companies for any tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change and the climate impacts being inflicted upon Marylanders. This is basic authority that Maryland's Attorney General should have to be able to protect Marylanders and to seek to place the cost burden of climate impacts where it belongs — on the big polluters who are responsible. The bill also provides the Attorney General with important flexibility, including being able to hire outside counsel and exempting the litigation from the Maryland Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCATA).

In addition, the bill creates a Fund, consisting of money received as a result of such litigation, to pay for programs that prevent, mitigate, or repair harms caused by climate change.

In short, this bill is about basic accountability and about ensuring that the costs of climate impacts caused by big polluters do not fall on the shoulders of state residents.

CLPP respectfully urges a favorable report on this bill.

ECA testimony on SB0432 - Climate Crimes.pdf

Uploaded by: Frances Stewart

Position: FAV



SB0432 - SUPPORT
Frances Stewart, MD
Elders Climate Action Maryland
frances.stewart6@gmail.com
301-718-0446

SB0432, Climate Crimes Accountability Act

Meeting of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, on behalf of Elders Climate Action Maryland, I urge a favorable report on SB0432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act.

Elders Climate Action is a nationwide organization devoted to ensuring that our children, grandchildren, and future generations have a world in which they can thrive. The Maryland Chapter has members across the state.

Each day, we see the climate crisis more clearly. We know that Maryland is at risk for sea level rise, flooding from intense rainfall, heat waves, and other extreme weather events.

The major cause of this crisis is climate pollution from burning fossil fuels. Exxon has known about this potentially devastating problem since at least 1967¹. But instead of taking positive action to change their business model, they and other major fossil fuel companies engaged in a decades-long campaign of deception, which has caused immense damage in Maryland and throughout the world.

The Maryland Office of the Comptroller estimates this cost to be between 10 and 20 billion dollars, based on 85 identified severe weather events in our state between 1980 and 2024. Climate scientists agree that these events will worsen as

¹ Shannon Hall, "Exxon Knew about Climate Change Almost 40 Years Ago," Scientific American, accessed February 6, 2026, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/exxon-knew-about-climate-change-almost-40-years-ago/>.

the climate continues to warm.² It is unfair for Marylanders to have to pay for these escalating damages while those who profited from causing them are not held accountable.

The Climate Crimes Accountability Act authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, commence, prosecute, or defend any action by large fossil fuel companies (market capitalization above \$1 billion) for any unlawful conduct (civil or criminal) that has contributed to climate change. SB432 also waives Maryland's Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCATA) for actions brought under this bill. Waiving UCATA facilitates settlements with one or more of the parties held responsible for climate damages since it allows a judge or jury to determine comparative responsibility rather than encouraging additional lawsuits among the liable parties to determine relative financial responsibility. It also allows the Attorney General to hire outside counsel, which would lessen the burden on the Attorney General's office, provide specialized expertise, and be more cost-effective. With these provisions, SB432 now has the Attorney General's wholehearted support and is one of his two top priorities.

SB432 also establishes a separate Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to ensure that any recovery funds are used solely to supplement state programs that prevent, mitigate, or repair harms caused by climate change. The bill includes a broad list of adverse effects of climate change that the fund could address through various programs. These are separate funds from those that might be obtained under the RENEW Act if that or a similar bill is introduced and enacted in a subsequent session.

We strongly urge a **favorable** report on the Climate Crimes Accountability Act. Thank you for your time and consideration.

² "Chapter 11: Weather and Climate Extreme Events in a Changing Climate," accessed September 2, 2025, <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/chapter/chapter-11/>.

SB432 AG .pdf

Uploaded by: Gwen DuBois

Position: FAV



Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility supports and urges passage of the SB 432 Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund

Hearing: Senate Judicial Proceedings

February 10, 2026

Position: Favorable

Analysis

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility (CPSR), an organization founded by physicians with over 800 supporters, supports SB 432 because it would make the major fossil fuel companies that knowingly misled the public about the health harms of their product, be held fiscally responsible for the harm that they have caused.

At CPSR, our mission is to address the greatest public health threats of all: nuclear war, climate change, and issues related to pollution. We are committed locally to addressing environmental injustice and health disparities.

The story of “big oil” is similar to the story of “big tobacco.” Leaders of both industries knew about the harm their products were causing to public health for years, covered up and lied to the public as they tried to and successfully influenced public policy. The result was that millions of people were harmed for years after the science was clear. This is a deadly kind of deception. Both industries even used the same public relations firms.

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/tobacco-and-oil-industries-used-same-researchers-to-sway-public1/>

As early as 1950, fossil fuel companies were informed, at an industry meeting, that their product was a major contributor to climate warming. Later, in 1980, a major industry association hosted science experts who presented a report that use of fossil fuels was a major contributor to CO2 rise that would result in a “global catastrophic by 2067.” Top scientists within the industry predicted accurately what their product was doing. When companies became aware that this climate science could affect their bottom line, they pivoted from research in 1980’s to a “covert climate science disinformation campaign to try to confuse the public and block governmental action.” Fearing that they would face the same fate as the tobacco companies, hundreds of billions of dollars in a 1998 settlement, the fossil fuel industry developed a “campaign of deception and disinformation about climate science.”

<https://www.ucs.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/Decades-of-Deceit-report-f.pdf>

The health costs from this deception are staggering. The changes in climate from manmade sources of CO2 and other greenhouse gases, caused in a large part by fossil fuels, have resulted in deaths, illness and injuries from wildfires, major storms and heat waves. Increased pollen has led to an increase in asthma and allergies and spread of mosquitos, ticks and other vectors have caused an increase in infections. In addition, there are the mental health costs of climate change related disruption and all have increased hospital, emergency room and clinic visits. The annual cost in the U.S. has been estimated in the billions of dollars. The cost of illness and death from fossil fuel related air pollution is much greater, a total from both pollution and climate change has been estimated at over \$800 billion annually. <https://www.nrdc.org/press-releases/report-health-costs-climate-change-and-fossil-fuel-pollution-tops-820-billion-year>

The Maryland Comptroller estimated in 2025, the climate costs to Maryland for extreme weather events between 1980 and 2024, as \$10-20 billions. She also refers in her report, to the increase in **illness and death** from storms, fires, heat waves, and air pollution effecting Marylanders. The impact falls on the most vulnerable communities. <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/state-spending-series-climate-change-costs-april-2025.pdf>

This deception by the major oil, gas, and coal companies about their product, like the tobacco industry in the last century, has had immense health, morbidity and mortality consequences. As an organization committed to advocating for public health policy that protects the public, we believe that SB 432 is important to help this State pay for the harms done to its people. It is appropriate to have monetary consequences when corporations knowingly violate the public trust and cause harm.

Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility urges you to vote favorably on SB 432, and allow the Attorney General to hold these companies responsible for the harm they have cause.

Gwen L. DuBois MD, MPH
President
Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
<https://www.chesapeakepsr.org/>

SB0432 - Climate Crimes Accountability Act.pdf

Uploaded by: HoCo Climate Action Organization

Position: FAV



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony: SB0432 - Climate Crimes Accountability Act
Hearing Date: Feb. 10, 2026
Bill Sponsor: Senator Love
Committee: Judicial Proceedings & Education, Energy, and the Environment
Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. We are also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#). Our organization works with residents and ally organizations to promote a safe climate and clean energy future. Specifically, we have worked extensively on building electrification to help Maryland achieve its ambitious climate goals, including net-zero emissions.

We urge you to vote favorably on **SB0432 - Climate Crimes Accountability Act**, which authorizes the Maryland Attorney General to investigate, commence, prosecute or defend any action by large fossil fuel companies (market capitalization above \$1 billion) for any unlawful conduct (civil or criminal) that has contributed to climate change.

It has been well documented that fossil fuel companies like ExxonMobil have known since the 1970's about the impacts of climate change. According to a [2023 Harvard study](#), Exxon researchers created models and analyses that predicted with remarkable accuracy that carbon dioxide emissions would lead to global warming. Despite, and perhaps because of this knowledge, fossil fuel companies sought to withhold this information. Worse yet, they instigated an organized campaign to mislead the public, and like tobacco companies, disparage experts who tried to sound the alarm with real scientific information.

Lawsuits have been filed across the country to hold polluters responsible and to make them pay for climate change impacts affecting many communities. Maryland has ample examples of how climate change is affecting our communities from severe flooding to sea level rise to drought. Taxpayers across the state are being forced to bear the cost of addressing these impacts.

Howard County is one community that has had 2 catastrophic flooding events with loss of life in Ellicott City and the costs incurred have been massive. With the help of state, local, and federal partners, more than \$300 million in total funding has been secured for the Safe and Sound Plan and related flood mitigation projects in Ellicott City. These costs are being borne by taxpayers even though these events were caused by climate change due to the harm caused by Big Oil. The cost of climate harm must be covered somehow - either by increasing state and local taxes, reducing services, or making polluters pay. We want polluters to pay. The Attorney General supports SB0432 and it is one of his top two priorities this session.

For these reasons, we **support SB0432** and recommend a **favorable** report.

Howard County Climate Action
Submitted by Liz Feighner, Steering and Advocacy Committee
www.HoCoClimateAction.org
HoCoClimateAction@gmail.com

Climate Crimes 2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Jamie DeMarco

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF
BRITTANY BAKER
MARYLAND DIRECTOR**

—
**JAMIE DEMARCO
LOBBYIST**

—
**MIKE TIDWELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

SB432- CLIMATE CRIMES ACCOUNTABILITY ACT
JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS
FEBRUARY 10TH, 2026
FAVORABLE TESTIMONY

On behalf of the Chesapeake Climate Action Network Action Fun, I urge a favorable report on SB432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act.

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. SB432 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.

SB432 creates The Climate Crimes Accountability 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.

We must hold fossil fuel companies accountable for their actions and contributions to climate change. I respectfully request a favorable report on SB432.

Support of SB0432 The Climate Crimes Accountabilit

Uploaded by: Jennifer Mizrahi

Position: FAV



**In Support of SB0432 The Climate Crimes Accountability
Committee: Senate Judicial Proceedings Hearing Date: February 10, 2026, at 1:00 PM
Testimony of Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, Co-Founder, Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund,
Maryland Climate Commissioner* (for identification purposes only)**

Chair, Vice Chair, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB0432 and thank Delegate Ruth and her colleagues for their leadership in bringing forward this important legislation. This bill is about accountability and ensuring that the burden of climate-related destruction does not fall solely on Maryland most vulnerable and taxpayers while those responsible – big oil and gas -- evade responsibility.

This issue is strikingly similar to what we saw with tobacco and opioids.

I grew up in the largest tobacco-producing district in the world. My father, a cancer doctor, saw firsthand how the tobacco industry knowingly misled the public, giving free cigarettes to employees while denying the deadly link to cancer. Day after day, he treated patients suffering and dying from lung cancer. Despite enormous opposition, my father and his colleagues testified before Congress. Their efforts and others led to warning labels, awareness, and eventually a **\$246 billion settlement to states that saved lives and improved public health.**

Big Oil and Gas have followed the same deceptive playbook. They knew over 50 years ago that their products were fueling climate catastrophes, yet they chose profit over responsibility, misleading the public while the damage escalated.

I live in Annapolis, where our home floods so often that we can no longer obtain flood insurance. This is true of a lot of property in Maryland – making it near impossible to sell homes where a mortgage is required. During the summer there are times when it is so hot now that schools close due to extreme heat. Wastewater systems are overrun by extreme rain. Meanwhile, our farmers and watermen are struggling. Climate-related costs are draining Maryland's budget, leaving less money for education, disability services, healthcare, housing, transportation and public safety.

This bill is about fairness. It ensures that the companies responsible for climate damage contribute to the solutions rather than shifting the burden onto Maryland taxpayers. Just as states held Big Tobacco accountable, we must do the same with the fossil fuel industry.

I urge you to support this critical legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Fact Sheet: SB0432 The Climate Crimes Accountability

Addressing Maryland's Budget Crisis

Maryland is facing a severe budget shortfall, putting critical funding for education, public safety, housing, and transportation at risk.

- Climate-related damages are draining taxpayer dollars at an unsustainable rate: \$228M for flood prevention in Ellicott City.
- \$84M for tidal protection in Annapolis.
- \$950K annually for stormwater infrastructure in St. Mary's County.

Every dollar spent on the impacts of climate change is a dollar unavailable for other state priorities.

They Knew

- Over 50 years ago, the oil industry had a deep understanding of the impact that fossil fuels would have on global temperatures.
- The oil companies were warned by their own scientists as far back as 1977 that their product could have “potentially catastrophic consequences.”
- Exxon's own climate modeling predicted today's temperature rise with astonishing accuracy.
- Rather than act on that knowledge, oil industry executives chose to protect their profits by engaging in decades of denial and deceit, casting public doubt on the very science they knew to be true.

How the Climate Lawsuit Bill Helps

- Holds Polluters Accountable Allows Maryland's Attorney General to sue major fossil fuel companies for their role in causing - and misleading the public about - climate change.
- These lawsuits would target the biggest offenders, ensuring accountability while protecting small businesses.
- Protects Maryland Taxpayers Shifts the financial burden of climate-related damages from Maryland families to the companies that caused the crisis.
- Prevents further strain on the state budget, freeing up funds for essential services like education and public safety.
- Creates a Climate Change Mitigation Fund Money recovered through lawsuits will go into a dedicated fund for addressing the impacts of the climate crisis, such as flooding, heatwaves, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels.
- An advisory committee will ensure that resources are used effectively and equitably.

Fiscal Responsibility at Its Core

- Climate-related damages are inevitable, but their costs don't have to fall on taxpayers.
- This bill ensures that polluters—not Marylanders—pay for the damages caused by their lies and greed.

SB432 Climate Crimes Accountability Act Favorable.

Uploaded by: Karl Held

Position: FAV



CLIMATE COALITION

Montgomery County, MD

**Bill SB432 – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund
(Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization: Climate Coalition, Montgomery County

Submitting: Karl Held

Position: Favorable

Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Committee Members:

I have lived in Potomac for over 30 years. I am concerned about the impacts of climate change on the lives of my children and grandchildren and about the costs they will have to shoulder as a result of actions by certain large fossil fuel companies. SB432 creates the possibility that to the extent these companies have contributed to climate change in a manner that violates Maryland tort law, Maryland can hold them financially liable for the damages they have caused Maryland residents, businesses and government entities in the state. The Climate Crimes Accountability Act addresses this concern. Accordingly, I urge you to vote **favorably** on SB432.

Now that the RENEW Act study is going forward to quantify the costs to Maryland resulting from climate change, Maryland will be prepared to consider holding fossil fuel companies responsible for any violations of Maryland tort law. The Attorney General also has the advantage of learning from similar lawsuits brought in other states and local jurisdictions. In that vein, this Committee may want to consider defenses alleged by major fossil fuel companies in those other cases, including the litigation brought by the City of Annapolis, and consult with the Attorney General about whether to expand the parties that could be sued to include industry trade or research associations.

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¹ See proposed Section 1-307(e) in the bill.

[parties](#), leaving money on the table. Importantly, SB432 also allows the Attorney General to hire outside counsel, which creates the flexibility of using contingency or hourly fees or a different fee structure. With these provisions, SB432 now has the Attorney General's wholehearted support and is one of his high priorities.

SB432 also creates a separate Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to ensure that any recovery is used only to supplement state programs that prevent, mitigate or repair harms caused by climate change. Creating a separate fund mitigates against the temptation by the state to use the recovery funds for unrelated state budget needs. SB432 includes a broad list of adverse climate change effects that the fund could address through different programs. Importantly, these are separate applications of funds than those that might be obtained under the RENEW Act should that act be introduced and enacted in a subsequent session.

To enable Maryland businesses, residents and governmental bodies at all levels to potentially undertake what will likely be extremely expensive actions to prevent, mitigate or repair the harms caused by climate change, I urge a favorable report on SB432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act.

Climate Action.pdf

Uploaded by: Kenny Love-Fabrizio

Position: FAV

SB 432 - Climate Crimes Accountability Act - Favorable

When presented with the facts of climate change, these companies, these people, weighed the consequences to themselves, the planet, and their *children*, and chose their shareholders. They had the opportunity of a lifetime to present their findings to the world and become a champion of sustainability, but because that was “too risky,” they chose to sell their children’s future for a few billion dollars. Not only did they damn their own children, but yours, too. When you were a child, how often did you have to worry about air quality before you went to school? These are not far-off, future problems; these are real, present dangers. Our air is toxic, our water is polluted, and large portions of the earth are set to become uninhabitable in our lifetime. These companies have *poisoned* the American people, along with the entire world. They lied to the American public in service of their own short term profit, knowing full well that it would be their children rather than them that would suffer the consequences of their greed.

The planet I live on may become uninhabitable during my lifetime as a result of decisions I was given no say in. My future, and the futures of everyone in my generation and the next, were sacrificed before we were even born so that a few businessmen could make extra money for themselves and their shareholders.

Think about your own children: what would you do to protect them? What would you give to ensure their future? These companies have committed a crime not just against the American people, but against the entire world. For decades, it has been allowed to go unpunished, and make no mistake, it’s still happening: they’re still pouring millions into their lies, and billions into the campaigns of legislators who will ensure that nothing will be done about this. I’m willing to bet that corporations have taken a particular interest in this bill for that exact reason. They want you to prioritize their industry over your own children.

The time to act was 30 years ago, but we still have a chance to preserve our future. If we take action *now*, we can salvage our future and bring justice to the people who tried to harvest it. It’s a parent’s job to protect their children and a government’s job to protect its citizens, so DO IT.

I’m still a young man, but I have often thought about children of my own. The decision I’ve reached is that I want to be a father, but I refuse to have children only to saddle them with the responsibility of fixing a burning world. One way or another, I will not bring kids into a dying planet. So I implore you, for the sake of your generation, mine, and all the next, please take action before it’s too late.

SB0432_Climate Crimes Accountability Act_Judicial

Uploaded by: Laurie McGilvray

Position: FAV



Testimony on: SB0432 – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes
Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 10, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today on SB0432. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of 32 grassroots and professional organizations focused on climate justice, urges you to vote favorably on SB0432.

The Climate Crimes Accountability Act (SB0432) authorizes the Maryland Attorney General to investigate, commence, prosecute or defend any action by large fossil fuel companies (market capitalization above \$1 billion) for any unlawful conduct (civil or criminal) that has contributed to climate change. Furthermore, SB0432 waives Maryland’s Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCADA) for actions brought under this bill. Waiving UCADA, facilitates settlements with one or more of the parties held responsible for climate damages. It allows a judge or jury to determine comparative responsibility rather than encouraging additional lawsuits among liable parties to determine relative financial responsibility. This is what was done to hold the responsible parties accountable for the 2024 Key Bridge collapse. SB0432 also allows the Attorney General to hire outside counsel and establishes a special “Climate Restitution Fund” to hold any payments collected through successful actions.

Lawsuits have been filed across the country to hold polluters responsible and to make them pay for climate change impacts affecting many communities. Maryland has ample examples of how climate change has and is affecting our communities from severe flooding to sea level rise to drought. Taxpayers across the state are being forced to bear the cost of addressing these impacts.

It has been well documented that fossil fuel companies like ExxonMobil have known since the 1970’s about the impacts of climate change. According to a [2023 Harvard study](#), Exxon researchers created models and analyses that predicted with remarkable accuracy that carbon dioxide emissions would lead to global warming. Despite, and perhaps because of this knowledge, fossil fuel companies sought to withhold this information. Worse yet, they instigated an organized campaign to mislead the public, and like tobacco companies, disparage experts who tried to sound the alarm with real scientific information.

Because of the harm that burning fossil fuels has caused, we need to make the largest companies who caused it pay for the damage from their “climate crimes.” The Attorney General supports SB0432 and it is one of his top two priorities this session. For these reasons we ask for a FAVORABLE report.

- 350MoCo
- Adat Shalom Climate Action
- Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church Environmental Justice Ministry
- Chesapeake Earth Holders
- Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Climate Communications Coalition
- Climate Parents of Prince George's
- Climate Reality Greater Maryland
- ClimateXChange
- Coming Clean Network, Union of Concerned Scientists
- DoTheMostGood Montgomery County
- Echotopia
- Elders Climate Action Maryland
- Fix Maryland Rail
- Glen Echo Heights Mobilization
- Greenbelt Climate Action Network
- HoCoClimateAction
- Howard County Indivisible
- Maryland Legislative Coalition
- Maryland Energy Advocates
- Maryland Third Act
- Mizrahi Family Charitable Fund
- Mobilize Frederick
- Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
- Montgomery Countryside Alliance
- Mountain Maryland Movement
- Nuclear Information & Resource Service
- Progressive Maryland
- Safe & Healthy Playing Fields
- Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee
- The Climate Mobilization MoCo Chapter
- Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

SB 432 - CBF - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Senate Bill 432

Environment – Water Resources and Wetlands – Enforcement

Date: February 10, 2026	Position: FAVORABLE
To: Judicial Proceedings Committee Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee	From: Matt Stegman, MD Staff Attorney

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 432**, which sets up the legal framework for Maryland's Attorney General to investigate, prosecute and defend suits that hold entities accountable for tortious or unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change. The bill gives the Attorney General authority to hold entities accountable based on their proportional responsibility. Finally, SB 432 sets up a special fund to hold any monetary awards collected through actions authorized under the bill.

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. SB 432 will put Maryland on equal footing with states, counties, and municipalities across the country that have taken action against the entities responsible for contributing towards climate change. Damages recovered under actions taken pursuant to the bill will provide crucial funding for climate resiliency initiatives in the years ahead as Maryland continues to navigate a challenging fiscal landscape.

For these reasons, **CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 432.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403

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.

SB 432 Fav NDR.pdf

Uploaded by: Neka Duckett-Randolph

Position: FAV



OUT FOR JUSTICE

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 432 Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 323 Youth Charging Reform Act

Committee Name: Judicial Proceedings

Hearing Date: 02/04/2026

Submitted by: Neka Duckett-Randolph, Membership, Advocacy, & Strategic Partnership Coordinator, Out For Justice

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Committee Name: Judicial Proceedings

Hearing Date: 02/10/2026

Submitted by: Neka Duckett-Randolph, Membership, Advocacy, & Strategic Partnership Coordinator, Out For Justice

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee, Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair, and members of the committee.

My name is Neka Duckett-Randolph, and I am the resident environmentalist at Out For Justice, a member-based grassroots organization dedicated to engaging, educating, and empowering communities to build power to dismantle harmful systems of oppression.

I want to speak today about **equity** – specifically, *who bears the burdens of climate pollution in Maryland and who benefits from polluters avoiding accountability.*

Right now, the costs of pollution fall hardest on communities that are already overburdened and underserved. In Baltimore’s Infamous Black Butterfly, decades of environmental degradation and disinvestment have left Black neighborhoods exposed to *multiple intersecting health risks* – from asthma and heat stress to legacy lead exposure, blight, and flooding.

Even as childhood lead poisoning has declined due to strong prevention laws, lead hazards remain a serious concern in older housing stock, with no amount of lead being safe for children and contributing to lifelong health and behavioral challenges.

Baltimore also experiences some of the worst asthma hospitalization rates in the nation, with elevated rates tied to air pollution and climate-linked factors like heat and precipitation that exacerbate respiratory conditions.

And extreme weather events are no longer rare: **flooding and nuisance tide events are increasing**, threatening public safety, damaging infrastructure, and imposing costs on families and local governments that had no role in causing climate change.

These harms – to *health, safety, housing, and economic stability* – are not evenly distributed. They disproportionately affect Black Marylanders, low-income residents,



children, and older adults who lack the resources to recover on their own. That is fundamentally inequitable.

SB 432 helps correct that imbalance. It gives the Attorney General the authority to pursue actions against entities whose misconduct has contributed to climate pollution and establishes a Climate Crimes Accountability Fund so that the *costs of climate damage are borne by the polluters, not the people least able to afford them.*

Equity means not just acknowledging harm but *ensuring justice.* This bill shifts responsibility back to those who profited from pollution and away from the families and communities who have endured its consequences.

For these reasons, Out For Justice urges a *favorable report* on SB 432.

Testimony- SB 432 Climate Crimes - Support-Phil We

Uploaded by: Phil Webster

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 432 - Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

TO: Chair Smith and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Phil Webster, PhD, Lead Advocate for the Climate
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
DATE: February 10, 2026

The Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM-MD) strongly supports **SB 432 - Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund - (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**. We are a faith-based advocacy organization based on Unitarian Universalist (UU) Values, including Interdependence (honoring the interdependent web of all existence) and Justice (where all feel welcome and can thrive). Working to mitigate, adapt to, and build resilience for climate change is central to our beliefs. The **Climate Crimes Accountability Act** aligns with both of the values by assigning responsibility for climate change and its expensive cost and impacts to the lives of all Marylanders, especially those who are forced to live in overburdened and underserved communities.

“Exxon Lied” is a familiar refrain when discussing climate change and its impacts on the lives of billions of people around the world. And it is not just Exxon but literally dozens of national and international Corporations. Research indicates Exxon knew about the risks of climate change as early as the 1970s, with their own scientists accurately predicting global warming trends. Despite this, reports show the company publicly cast doubt on climate science for decades to protect its business interests, funding climate deniers and engaging in disinformation.

And now, the impacts are becoming obvious. Today across our state, heavier rains, higher tides, and record heat are damaging our lives and infrastructure. Last year, Governor Moore stated that Maryland needs \$1B per year for mitigation, resilience, and adaptation. The **Climate Crimes Accountability Act** can provide these necessary funds without making Marylanders bear the financial burden. Failure to adopt the **Climate Crimes Accountability Act** is effectively a steadily increasing tax on Marylanders to pay for the impacts of Climate Change.

Maryland needs to hold those responsible for climate change to account! We urge a FAVORABLE report on **SB 432**.

Phil Webster, PhD

Lead Advocate for the Climate, UULM-MD

UULM-MD c/o UU Church of Annapolis 333 Dubois Road Annapolis, MD 21401 410-266-8044,

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SB 432 Maryland LCV FAV Climate Crimes Accountabil

Uploaded by: Rebecca Rehr

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
LEAGUE OF
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Executive Director

February 10, 2026

**Support: SB 432 Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes
Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Mr. Chairs and Members of the Committees:

Maryland LCV Supports SB 432 - Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act), and we thank Senator Love for her leadership on this issue.

SB 432 expressly provides the Attorney General with authority to investigate and take legal action against publicly traded entities with more than \$1 billion in market capitalization that are or were involved in extracting, refining, or processing coal, oil, or gas, holding them accountable for any unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change. By focusing on the largest fossil fuel companies, the legislation ensures accountability for those most responsible for driving and misleading the public about the climate crisis, while avoiding impacts on small businesses or local employers. Although the Attorney General already holds general prosecutorial authority under [Article V of Maryland's Constitution](#), SB 432 clarifies and codifies that this authority extends to these specific climate-related legal actions.

The bill also establishes a Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to finance programs that prevent, mitigate, or repair harms caused by climate change. 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. We would support an amendment to allocate at least 40% of the fund to overburdened or underserved areas of the state, similar to an approach other funds in the state have taken.

Climate-related disasters are already placing a growing strain on state and local budgets. In recent years, Maryland has experienced multiple extreme-weather events causing billions of dollars in damage. SB 432 would help shift the financial burden of responding to these impacts away from Maryland families and taxpayers and toward companies whose unlawful conduct substantially contributed to the crisis.

This bill would ensure that Maryland's Attorney General has the tools to seek accountability and to secure resources that can be reinvested in climate resilience and public health across the state. Maryland LCV urges a favorable report on this bill.

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Phone: 410-280-9855

www.mdlc.org

SB0432 Climate Crimes Accountability Act- SUPPORT.

Uploaded by: Robert Wald

Position: FAV

SB0432 - SUPPORT

Robert Wald and Pamela Steele
Silver Spring, MD 20902
District 18
rwald1729@verizon.net
301-326-5181

SB0432 - The Climate Crimes Accountability Act

Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 10, 2025

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

We respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of SB0432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act. This legislation provides Maryland with the legal tools to hold fossil fuel companies accountable for their role in causing climate change and the devastating impacts we are experiencing across our state.

Maryland is on the front lines of the climate crisis, and for far too long taxpayers, small businesses, and farmers have shouldered the full burden of climate change-related costs, even though they are not at fault for the damages.

Sea levels in the Chesapeake Bay have risen approximately 1.5 feet since 1900, and projections show another 2 to 3 feet of rise levels by 2100. Saltwater intrusion is damaging agricultural land and historic sites on the Eastern Shore.

The damage polluters have caused is deadly: In 2025, Maryland recorded 29 heat-related deaths, the highest number since 2012, with Baltimore City experiencing the most fatalities.

Extreme weather events are intensifying, Hurricane Ida's remnants devastated Ellicott City, and Western Maryland is still recovering from flooding in 2025. And the Trump regime has made it clear that disaster relief funds won't be allocated to "blue" states like Maryland.

Just the tobacco industry knew for decades that their products cause cancer and heart disease, fossil fuel companies knew their businesses were causing the climate crisis, and, like tobacco companies, deliberately lied. Exxon's own scientists warned of catastrophic warming back in the 1970s, yet the company spent decades funding campaigns of denial and deception.

This bill:

- Authorizes 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
- Exempts potential suits from Maryland's UCATA language applicable to potential suits or actions to ensure that the Attorney General can hold entities accountable based on their proportional responsibility
- Establishes a special fund to hold any payments that are collected through successful actions

Maryland taxpayers desperately need a remedy for the climate catastrophes the fossil fuel industry is responsible for, and The Climate Crimes Accountability Act gives the Maryland Attorney General the tools to seek one.

We strongly urge a favorable report on SB0432.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB 0432 state-spending-series-climate-change-costs

Uploaded by: Sara Love

Position: FAV



STATE SPENDING SERIES: CLIMATE CHANGE COSTS

APRIL 2025



As Maryland's Chief Fiscal Officer and a member of the state spending board – the Board of Public Works – the Comptroller of Maryland is supportive of cost-effective investments that grow the economy and advance economic opportunity for all Marylanders.

This report is part of a series that explains state expenses and shares lessons learned from across the United States and the world about cost drivers of critical infrastructure and other public goods that are essential to inclusive and resilient growth.

Climate change is significantly impacting people, communities, and economies worldwide through rising sea levels, prolonged heat waves, and more frequent and intense extreme weather events. The costs of inaction are severe, encompassing economic disruption, worsening health disparities, and long-term, irreversible environmental damage. Addressing the effects of climate change requires a range of smart investments, from mitigation projects that include efforts to reduce planet warming greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to the development of resilient infrastructure capable of withstanding future climate impacts.

It is essential to measure the costs of climate change in order to inform effective policies, strategies, and budget decisions for building a sustainable future. This involves complex economic modeling, incorporating direct expenses and indirect impacts over time, such as lost productivity, damage to natural ecosystems, and the long-term benefits of avoided harm. From there, policymakers and others will be better positioned to understand and make decisions that balance these costs for the benefit of Maryland.

This report outlines the categories and types of costs associated with climate change, followed by an examination of the costs of both action and inaction on climate change and its impacts. Finally, the report explores potential funding strategies to pay for new investments to address climate change. This report serves as a precursor to a larger project to calculate actual cost estimates, which the Comptroller's Office will undertake over the next two years.

Current State of the Climate

Anthropogenic climate change is caused by human activities, principally, the burning of fossil fuels. This has propelled Earth's climate system toward a critical threshold that, when crossed, can lead to abrupt and potentially irreversible changes. Immediate and decisive action is imperative. To ensure that responses are both strategic and cost-effective, it is essential to understand the costs of climate change as well as the most efficient and effective mitigation and resilience measures.



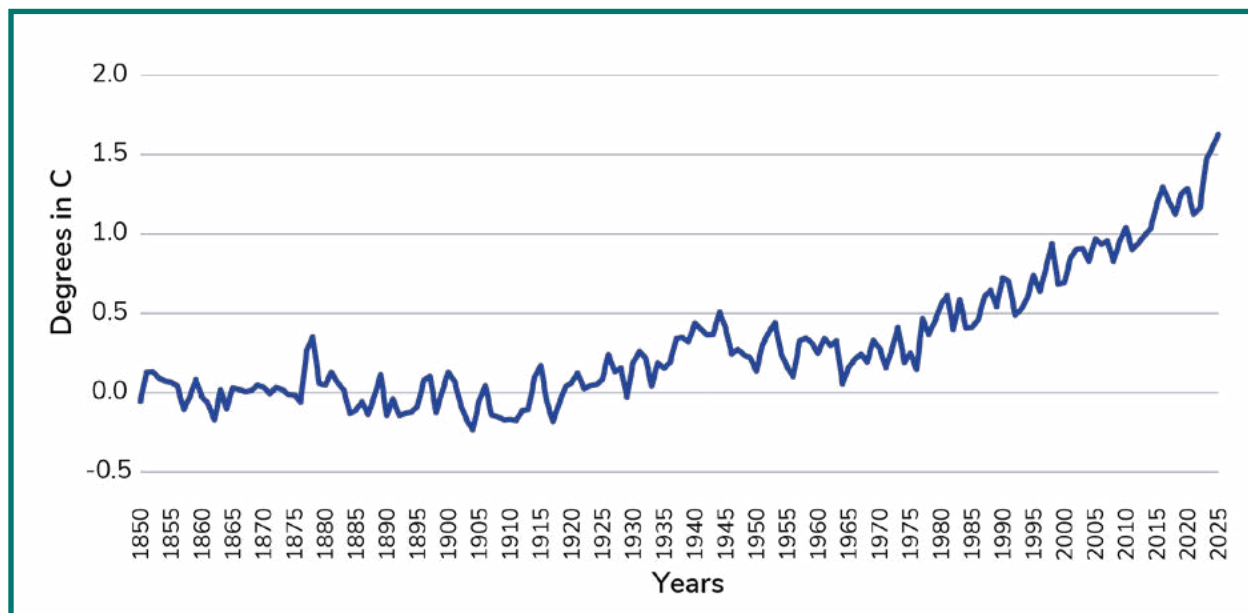


A look at the rise in global temperatures and sea levels explains the urgency of immediate action.

A look at the rise in global temperatures and sea levels explains the urgency of immediate action. Global temperatures are rising faster now than 2010 to 2020 which was the warmest decade on record. (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Global Warming: Annual Temperature Anomaly 1880-2024

The difference in average land-sea surface temperature compared to the 1861-1890 mean, in degrees Celsius.



Source: Met Office Hadley Centre - HadCRUT5 (2025)

[View Chart Data](#)

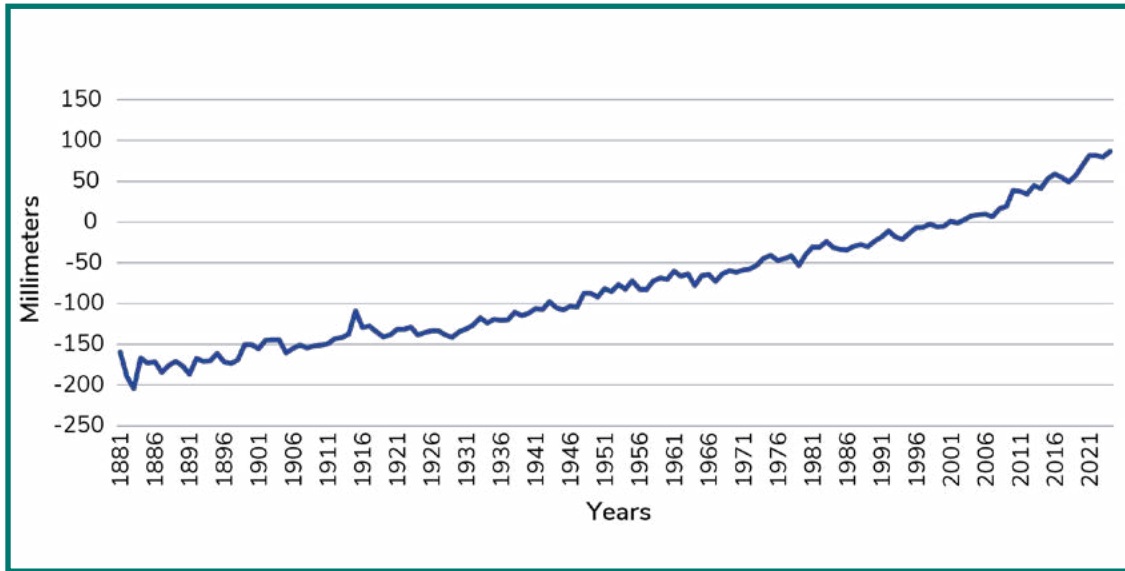
The rate of global sea level rise has also accelerated since the 1990s with levels rising faster than anticipated. (See Figure 2). The primary driver is the thermal expansion of ocean water as the ocean is warming faster than expected. Maryland is seeing a long-term upward trend of sea level rise that is double the rate of global sea level rise.¹ In the Chesapeake Bay, water levels have risen over one foot during the past century and are projected to rise another 1 to 5 feet over the next 100 years.² The Chesapeake Bay is predicted to have a higher rate of sea level rise compared to other parts of the East Coast.

Nearly all of Maryland's 2.2 million coastal properties are vulnerable to damage.³ Researchers with the University of Maryland's Coastal Climate Program found that Baltimore experienced 11 high-tide-flooding days in 2019 due to sea-level rise and will experience between 50-155 days of flooding by 2050. In addition, more than 100 communities in Maryland may be at risk of chronic inundation from sea-level rise and storm surges by the end of the century.⁴ A conservative cost estimate of what it will take to safeguard businesses, homes, roads, and entire communities in Maryland from chronic flooding alone (not including other climate hazards) by 2040 under a moderate sea-level-rise scenario is \$27.4 Billion.⁵



Figure 2: Global Sea Level Rise

Global mean sea level rise is measured relative to the 1993 - 2008 average sea level. Church & White and University of Hawaii Sea Level Center (UHLSC)



Source: National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Climate.gov (2022)

[View Chart Data](#)

Sea level rise and other climate hazards create a significant financial cost to residents and governments. By making smart investments in climate mitigation and resilience projects, it is possible to reduce harm and control costs. Vulnerable communities are and will continue to bear an unprecedented financial burden to adapt and rebuild in the face of unrelenting climate impacts.

Cost of Climate Change

One of the most noticeable aspects and costs of climate change is the escalating severity of extreme weather events. As the impacts of this severe weather intensify, it becomes increasingly important to evaluate the challenges that state and local governments and communities face. Climate change will further impact already difficult budget decisions at every level of government. Although responding to climate change requires significant upfront costs, the long-term return on investment may justify the initial costs. Accurately quantifying the impacts and costs can help state and local governments plan effectively, respond proactively, and manage these financial pressures more responsibly.

The U.S. has sustained 403 weather and climate disasters since 1980. The total cost of these events, which includes drought and flooding events, wildfires and severe storm events exceeds \$2.9 trillion.⁶ In 2024 alone, there were 27 confirmed weather or climate disaster events in the U.S. with losses exceeding \$1 billion per event and totaling nearly \$400 billion overall, with at least 568 direct or indirect fatalities.

Maryland experienced 85 extreme weather events between 1980 and 2024. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the total recovery costs for Maryland were between \$10 billion to \$20 billion dollars.⁷ Some of these costs included property and infrastructure damage, crop loss, and loss of revenue to businesses. Maryland will not be immune from more disasters in the coming decades; the costs of recovery will grow in tandem.



Through the rapidly developing area of science called “attribution science,” researchers can now estimate how much human-generated (anthropogenic) emissions from fossil fuel activity have shifted the odds of extreme weather events occurring.

Although extreme weather events have always occurred, scientists can now quantify how much more intense and frequent they have become due to climate change. Through the rapidly developing area of science called “attribution science,” researchers can now estimate how much human-generated (anthropogenic) emissions from fossil fuel activity have shifted the odds of extreme weather events occurring. This research can enable economists to calculate the share of extreme weather costs that is attributable to fossil fuels versus historically natural causes. Maryland can use this emerging science to assess the additional expenditures the state is spending due to anthropogenic climate change.

Cost of Inaction

To fully account for the true cost of climate change, it is crucial to consider not only the immediate impacts, such as disaster cleanup from extreme weather, but also the broader, compounding economic pressures it creates. Climate-related hazards drive up costs of materials, strain public health systems, deplete natural resources, inflate housing prices, and trigger insurance spikes — all of which pose significant obstacles to economic growth. Over time, the failure to invest in climate resilience and mitigation amplifies these financial burdens. While the state has yet to quantify the price of inaction, the following are key factors driving up costs as climate risks escalate.

Economy wide

Climate change places significant strain on the state’s economy and budget, disrupting key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and more. These disruptions lead to higher costs, reduced productivity, and widespread damage from extreme weather events. Specific economic impacts include:

- **Workforce disruptions:** Extreme heat and severe weather reduce worker productivity, especially in outdoor and labor-intensive industries.
- **Agricultural losses:** Intense heat, heavy rainfall, and stronger storms lower crop yields, reduce tillable farmland, increase water demand, and cause livestock and poultry losses. Sea level rise leads to saltwater intrusion on farmland, while rising production costs and supply challenges contribute to higher grocery prices.
- **Tourism decline:** Fewer pleasant weather days, reduced snowfall for winter sports, harmful algal blooms limiting water recreation, and the costly need for beach sand replenishment all diminish tourism revenue.
- **Supply chain disruptions and rising resource costs:** Climate impacts increase the costs of water, land, and raw materials, complicating supply chains across industries.
- **Infrastructure damage:** Flooding and severe storms damage roads, buildings, marinas, docks, waterfront businesses, and protective structures like riprap. Roads, bridges, and power lines often require costly rebuilding.



- **Loss of essential services:** Power outages, water and sewer system failures, and internet disruptions — including damage to undersea cables and coastal interconnection points — threaten basic services and economic continuity.
- **Increased financial burdens:** The growing need for state-funded disaster relief and recovery grants further strains public resources.

Health (Morbidity and Mortality)

Climate change poses direct and indirect threats to human health. The severity of these risks largely depends on the capacity of public health and safety systems to anticipate and respond to evolving dangers. Individual factors — such as behavior, age, gender, and socioeconomic status — as well as geographic location, vulnerability to health hazards, level of exposure to climate impacts, and the ability of individuals and communities to adapt, will all influence outcomes. For Maryland residents, the health impacts of climate change include:

- **Heat-related illnesses:** More frequent and intense heat waves increase risks of heat exhaustion, heat stroke, cardiac events, and even spikes in violence during extreme heat.
- **Air quality degradation:** Emissions from fossil fuel power plants and vehicles, wildfire smoke, and rising levels of pollen and mold contribute to asthma and other respiratory conditions.
- **Power outages:** Disruptions to the electrical grid jeopardize the refrigeration of medications and the operation of life-saving medical devices.
- **Critical infrastructure systems:** Temporary loss of power, water, communications, and transportation systems impact services provided by health care facilities.
- **Food and waterborne illnesses:** Shifts in weather patterns and extreme events heighten the risk of infections and zoonotic diseases.
- **Vector-borne diseases:** Warming temperatures expand the habitat of disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes and ticks, increasing the spread of illnesses.
- **Injuries from extreme weather:** Severe storms and flooding lead to a rise in nonfatal injuries and necessitate more frequent search and rescue operations.
- **Mental health impacts:** The trauma of experiencing, or the fear of, extreme weather events contribute to PTSD, anxiety, and depression.

Insurance and Housing

Climate change-driven extreme weather events are displacing people from their homes and further straining the already critical shortage of safe, stable, and affordable housing. As sea levels rise and severe storms become more frequent, more properties face heightened risks of damage or total loss. Nationwide, disasters — from catastrophic flooding to wildfires — are also driving up insurance premiums and leading to policy cancellations in vulnerable areas. These impacts include:

- **Rising repair costs** for damaged homes and buildings.
- **Replacement costs** for personal belongings and building contents lost to disasters.
- **Home loss** due to mortgage foreclosures when insurance policies are canceled or not renewed.
- **Barriers to development** as businesses and housing projects struggle to secure necessary insurance coverage.



A new report from the Maryland Insurance Administration reveals that insurance companies are increasingly refusing to renew policies statewide, a decision that impacts homeowners, renters, and businesses.⁸

Natural Resources

Maryland is home to a rich array of natural resources — from the Chesapeake Bay and its iconic crab and oyster fisheries to expansive forests, fertile soils, and valuable minerals. However, climate change is placing these resources under severe threat, jeopardizing both ecological health and the services these ecosystems provide. Key impacts include:

- **Loss of biodiversity:** Shifting habitats and species decline reduce vital ecosystem services such as water filtration, pollination, and natural pest control.
- **Degradation of land and soil:** Saltwater intrusion from rising seas and declining soil health threaten agriculture and natural landscapes.
- **Forest decline:** Heat stress, prolonged drought, increased wildfire risk, and the spread of pests and diseases endanger Maryland's forests.
- **Wetland loss:** Rising sea levels are drowning wetlands, eroding natural buffers that protect coastlines and support biodiversity.
- **Freshwater fishery declines:** Warmer temperatures and algal blooms degrade freshwater habitats, harming fish populations.
- **Marine fishery declines:** Ocean acidification and warming seas disrupt marine ecosystems and fisheries critical to maintaining Maryland's seafood industry and economy.
- **Coastal impacts:** Sea level rise accelerates flooding and erosion, reshaping ecosystems and severely affecting agriculture, fisheries, and coastal communities.

Hidden Costs

Additional, “hidden” costs of climate change are numerous and include secondary and tertiary effects on people, places, and nature. Some examples include:

- **Essential services disruption:** Loss of service to the community when fire and police stations, hospitals and other public buildings are damaged.
- **Isolation:** Being stranded due to coastal and road and bridge flooding, isolating homes.
- **Mobility:** Damage to or temporary loss of transportation - ambulances, school buses, fire/police vehicles, and transit services.
- **Workforce disruptions:** The effects of climate-induced economic damage and rising morbidity results in lost jobs, lower labor force numbers, reduced economic production, and missing income.
- **Revenue loss:** Loss of revenue and other business interruption costs resulting from property damage.
- **Loss of life:** Due to initial loss and inability to reach those who need assistance.



Impact on underserved and overburdened communities

Under Maryland law in Environment Article 1-701, the state must ensure equal protection from environmental and public health hazards for all people regardless of race, income, culture, and social status.⁹ Many low-income households and communities of color, particularly those located next to polluting industries, have been disproportionately burdened with pollution and already face increased health issues, like long term health conditions and diseases due to that pollution. Extreme weather events also disproportionately impact these vulnerable communities, which are more likely to lack the financial resources to evacuate threatened areas and recover from disasters, thereby exacerbating existing inequality leading to increased economic hardship.

Climate change also factors into the increased costs of daily household expenses like groceries, energy, and insurance. Extreme weather impacts crop yields, leading to higher food prices. An increase in hot days leads to the need for more air conditioning, raising energy bills. Climate related disasters increase the risk to property and leads to higher insurance premiums.

Cost of Action

The cost of rebuilding homes, businesses, equipment, and infrastructure after disasters is enormous — and growing. However, with smart, proactive planning, state and local governments can significantly reduce these expenses. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s 2024 Climate Resiliency Report, every \$1 invested in resilience and disaster preparedness returns \$13 in avoided damages and recovery costs.¹⁰



Every \$1 invested in resilience and disaster preparedness returns \$13 in avoided damages and recovery costs

Climate change is already costing Maryland millions of dollars annually. Investing in resilience and mitigation now is essential to manage long-term costs for both the state and its residents. Delaying action will only make the damage — and the price tag — worse.

Investments in resilience not only protect communities but also ensure their survival. With thoughtful planning, including coordination between public and private authorities, there is the potential to reduce the impact of climate change and improve the resilience of Maryland at a community scale. Strengthening infrastructure — from roads, bridges, and ports to dams, railways, marinas, and airports — will bolster Maryland’s ability to withstand climate hazards. These steps are crucial to safeguarding the state’s economy and securing its long-term sustainability.

Maryland conducted a cost benefit analysis of mitigation policies in 2023 as part of the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan.¹¹ The plan includes modeling to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031 and net zero by 2045. Implementing the necessary mitigation measures, such as transitioning to cleaner power, transportation, and buildings, calls for an increased state investment of approximately \$8 billion by 2031. The modeling in the plan estimates \$135 billion in global economic societal benefits by reducing emissions by 646 million tons by 2050. This figure incorporates the social cost of carbon which is a monetary estimate of economic damages to society and the economy from GHG emissions, including impacts to human health and property damage.¹² As



detailed in the plan, implementing these mitigation policies in Maryland will add an estimated 27,000 jobs and grow the economy. There will also be improvements in air quality and public health outcomes especially for people living in underserved and overburdened communities.¹³

Examples of effective resilience and adaptation strategies include conserving and restoring natural ecosystems, protecting habitats, and safeguarding vital natural resources. Strengthening state and local economies involves reinforcing critical infrastructure, adopting climate-resilient construction practices, and improving the sustainability of food systems. Social resilience can be enhanced by developing and implementing comprehensive adaptation plans, establishing community resilience hubs, and expanding public education and outreach efforts. The following outlines the specific investments required to build climate resilience across these areas, organized by climate hazard.

Precipitation and Flooding

A warmer planet holds more water vapor in its atmosphere leading to heavier precipitation. This results in more rain per event, which leads to flooding. Resilience measures to consider include:

- **Flood proofing:** Relocate or elevate infrastructure (buildings, roads, bridges, transit, wastewater plants) especially in flood prone areas.
- **Reduce flood risk:** Improve drainage systems and flood control structures.
- **Restore natural flood protection:** Preserve floodplains, stream restoration, wetlands restoration, parks to absorb urban water and green stormwater.
- **Planning:** Develop and implement comprehensive flood management plans, emergency protocols, flood warning system, community education and preparedness campaigns, and safe evacuation routes.
- **Septic systems:** Divert water from septic systems and improve bermed infiltration ponds.
- **Build** Barrier walls, sea walls, flood gates, levees, and stormwater catchment systems.
- **Shore up** Ports, marinas, and public docks.

Storms

Climate change will intensify storms with heavier rainfall, stronger winds, and increased storm surges in Maryland, making storms more destructive and costly. Resilience measures to consider include:

- **Structure and infrastructure projects:**
 - Proactive defensive upgrades to roads, bridges, rail and transit systems.
 - Raising electrical components in buildings to above the base flood elevation.
 - Use of sump pumps and backflow valves.
 - Sewer systems/wastewater treatment plant upgrades.
- **Power:**
 - Protect power lines by pruning trees.
 - Update parts of the electrical grid to increase stability and resilience including supporting creation of self-sufficient microgrids.

- o Bury overhead power lines or install systems that ensure failure of only small sections of power lines rather than cascading failures.
- o Increase power storage capacity to enhance grid reliability.

Temperature

Global warming is most often associated with overall hotter temperatures. However, it is only one component of climate change; Maryland will experience increased likelihood and intensity of heatwaves, making them hotter, longer and more frequent. Resilience measures to consider include:

- **Electrification:** Transition to electric heat pumps that heat and cool buildings.
- **Energy Efficiency:** Increased energy efficiency in buildings with insulation, reflective surfaces, and tinted windows.
- **Cooling:** Establishing community cooling centers.
- **Trees:** Planting trees to reduce urban heat islands.
- **Drinking water:** Protecting drinking water supplies from heat induced algal growth.

Sea Level Rise

With nearly 3,100 miles of shoreline, Maryland is highly vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels. Seas will rise substantially over the next several decades and continue for at least several centuries. As temperatures warm and coastal tides creep inland, communities across the country face billion-dollar price tags for basic coastal defense. Resilience measures to consider include:

- **Planning:** Updating state guidance associated with coastal development in order to keep up with rapidly changing conditions.
- **Gray infrastructure:** Includes building sea walls, flood gates, and levees; and raising roads and bridges, to prevent road flooding and protect against rising water under roadways creating sink holes.
- **Green infrastructure:** Includes creating more natural wetlands, and natural shoreline stabilization and restoration.
- **Managed retreat:** Includes moving buildings away from the coast or bay.

Drought

While Maryland has an average rainfall of 43.6 inches, the state does experience droughts and climate models suggest that Maryland will experience more heat-related stress that could contribute to drought. Resilience measures to consider include:

- **Fire:** Prevention measures like controlled burns, and removal of dead brush.
- **Water:** Efforts to ensure water security through improved water infrastructure, monitoring, catchment, and conservation.
- **Agriculture:** Protecting agricultural assets including crops and livestock, improved irrigation, increased water storage capacity, and use of drought resistant crops.



- **Ecosystems:** Protect, expand and connect existing forests to ensure healthy balanced naturally drought tolerant natural places.

While investments in mitigation, resilience, and preparedness cannot prevent all losses associated with climate-related hazards, they can significantly reduce them. Over time, these preparedness investments generate savings and have economic benefits.

Paying for Climate Change Mitigation and Resilience

Although mitigation and resilience efforts are far more cost-effective than inaction, they still require substantial investment. State and local governments are using a range of strategies to finance these efforts. A crucial first step for state and local leaders is to quantify both the current and projected impacts of climate change, along with related expenditures. State investments are often intended to increase private investments and influence behavior by businesses and individuals, and they are also often directed to public sector projects that do not always receive private investment.¹⁴

This section outlines how Maryland is currently funding climate action, explores additional funding opportunities, and highlights how smart planning and policy decisions can help manage and reduce long-term climate costs.

Funding Sources

Maryland primarily funds climate action through a combination of the state budget, special funds and the Rainy-Day Fund. Prior to 2025, Maryland received supplemental appropriations from Congress with the Federal Emergency Management Agency playing a key role in providing federal funding and assistance. The future of these funds is unknown due to recent claw backs of funding by the Trump Administration. Maryland uses several sources, including grants, loans, equity investments, and various forms of debt financing to fund climate action.

Maryland is taking steps to enhance resilience of a broad spectrum of natural and human-based systems to the consequences of climate change. The state is investing in resilience with various initiatives funded by local, state, and federal sources totaling more than \$300 million.¹⁵

Currently Maryland uses the following sources to fund climate work:

- The Strategic Energy Investment Fund (SEIF) allocates proceeds from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and other sources to distribute revenues from new or expanded climate pollution reduction programs.¹⁶
- The Resilient Maryland Revolving Loan Fund provides low or no interest loans to local governments to help finance for resilience projects.¹⁷
- The Department of Natural Resources has a variety of grants for resilience including, but not limited to: Watershed assistance, Program Open Space, Rural Legacy, Keep Maryland Beautiful, Conservation easement, Forest Conservation and Green Space Equity programs.¹⁸
- The Maryland State Disaster Recovery Fund provides assistance in disaster-stricken areas.¹⁹ Money for the fund comes from the state budget, interest on loans from the fund, and federal reimbursement.
- Green banks are mission-driven financial institutions that leverage private capital to promote clean energy projects. The mission of the state’s green bank, the Maryland Clean Energy Center

is to encourage the transformation of the energy economy with programs that support local jurisdictions, regional green banks, catalyze business growth, increase related green-collar jobs, and make clean energy technologies, products, and services affordable, accessible, and easy to implement.

Maryland could consider additional funding sources to pay for climate-related work, many of which are employed by other states, including:

- Green Revenue Bonds, are a debt instrument issued to raise capital to cover the costs of climate resilience and mitigation projects and initiatives. Revenue bonds are repaid primarily from the cash flows generated by the specific projects they finance, and do not impact taxes or the state's capacity to use general obligation bonds to fund other state priorities.
- Some states and municipalities are seeking monetary damages, generally accusing fossil fuel companies of violating laws by concealing from the public for decades the fact that burning fossil fuels would lead to climate change.
- Create a State Resilience Finance Plan, as California has done and Massachusetts is pursuing, to provide Maryland with a strategic roadmap for funding critical resilience initiatives. Such a plan would identify existing and future costs, map out potential funding sources, and explore innovative financing strategies. It would also provide a statewide estimate of costs for key resilience measures, and analyze which investments offer the greatest returns.

Currently, taxpayers are responsible for the entirety of climate change impact costs: past, present and future. Some states are considering (or have passed) legislation to share the burden of financing these costs with oil and gas companies that are the biggest GHG emitters. In 2025, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to assess the cost of climate change adaptation and mitigation projects in Maryland as a result of GHG emissions. The legislation requires the state to conduct a study to assess the total cost of GHG emissions in Maryland.

The study will include a summary of various cost-driving effects of GHG emissions on the state and to residents, the costs incurred and projected to incur for each of those effects, as well as an economic analysis to determine if there would be a cost impact passed on to taxpayers should responsible parties be held accountable to cover these costs.

The Comptroller's Office will be the lead entity – in coordination with state agencies and stakeholders - in developing this study which is due for release in December 2026.

Conclusion

The costs of climate change are unavoidable, but implementing thoughtful plans, policies and mitigation, resilience and adaptation solutions now will generate savings over the long-term. Waiting to implement solutions only makes damage and solutions more costly and resource intensive. Maryland should take a preventative approach to climate action. As climate-related economic damages continue to grow, so too will their strain on the state's budget. Committing to equitable emissions reduction and climate and resilience today is an investment in reducing climate costs that can compound over time. National studies have shown that resilience, preparedness, and pre-disaster mitigation investments pay big returns. Resilience measures cannot prevent or erase the direct, post-climate hazard damage, but can reduce the harm caused, lessen the human toll and economic costs over the long term. The time to act is now.



Appendix – Data Tables for Charts

Figure 1: Global warming: annual temperature anomaly 1880-2024 in Celsius

Year	Temperature
1850	-0.05541366
1851	0.12894794
1852	0.13289867
1853	0.0919433
1854	0.07077692
1855	0.065381
1856	0.04194403
1857	-0.1049323
1858	-0.026467945
1859	0.08103258
1860	-0.027867433
1861	-0.06681519
1862	-0.17407164
1863	0.018053684
1864	-0.10316732
1865	0.029816423
1866	0.021010254
1867	0.005303625
1868	0.010470603
1869	0.0457058
1870	0.034370217
1871	-0.006265011
1872	0.03418717
1873	0.021000836
1874	-0.010953452
1875	-0.013328191

Year	Temperature
1876	-0.06181216
1877	0.2611889
1878	0.35098255
1879	0.05866343
1880	0.0464657
1881	0.13005222
1882	0.06676767
1883	0.015823338
1884	-0.13002232
1885	-0.108825825
1886	-0.058605876
1887	-0.13648802
1888	-0.017081138
1889	0.11240219
1890	-0.14456043
1891	-0.039017197
1892	-0.14526078
1893	-0.13232148
1894	-0.12146618
1895	-0.08645385
1896	0.07829047
1897	0.102497585
1898	-0.12349438
1899	0.006864104
1900	0.12780385
1901	0.06888751



Year	Temperature
1902	-0.07665878
1903	-0.17098936
1904	-0.23521331
1905	-0.045495477
1906	0.043188963
1907	-0.14177856
1908	-0.15152195
1909	-0.1733894
1910	-0.16861174
1911	-0.17678127
1912	-0.11324089
1913	-0.10471334
1914	0.09986118
1915	0.17062555
1916	-0.057725396
1917	-0.18052194
1918	-0.062066343
1919	0.037008677
1920	0.06394268
1921	0.121853404
1922	0.023284052
1923	0.04461587
1924	0.050496046
1925	0.08015577
1926	0.23974274
1927	0.13318415
1928	0.15583193
1929	-0.030145284

Year	Temperature
1930	0.18549232
1931	0.25890008
1932	0.21683604
1933	0.039953325
1934	0.1879609
1935	0.15623851
1936	0.1927768
1937	0.3430988
1938	0.350097
1939	0.32150054
1940	0.43823355
1941	0.40042704
1942	0.36370382
1943	0.36871934
1944	0.5064029
1945	0.4053861
1946	0.24348314
1947	0.27109215
1948	0.23763648
1949	0.21849552
1950	0.13567594
1951	0.3011438
1952	0.3776523
1953	0.4399285
1954	0.24554752
1955	0.1649878
1956	0.09913213
1957	0.32696283



Year	Temperature
1958	0.3446652
1959	0.31429294
1960	0.24683817
1961	0.34229797
1962	0.29825503
1963	0.32548714
1964	0.056436215
1965	0.15787727
1966	0.21340014
1967	0.24475846
1968	0.19365019
1969	0.33091152
1970	0.27723366
1971	0.1564087
1972	0.26850644
1973	0.4122479
1974	0.18977118
1975	0.25154352
1976	0.14646085
1977	0.46538624
1978	0.3675537
1979	0.45315588
1980	0.5583698
1981	0.6123098
1982	0.39656603
1983	0.5861076
1984	0.41029125
1985	0.41202748

Year	Temperature
1986	0.45798472
1987	0.60532415
1988	0.6444495
1989	0.5415481
1990	0.7228801
1991	0.7011943
1992	0.48719457
1993	0.52800494
1994	0.59584755
1995	0.7391639
1996	0.6389871
1997	0.7846063
1998	0.93963945
1999	0.6867827
2000	0.6933825
2001	0.8515781
2002	0.9057643
2003	0.9064679
2004	0.82966846
2005	0.96916026
2006	0.93485045
2007	0.9539991
2008	0.8279476
2009	0.9590794
2010	1.0426692
2011	0.8999955
2012	0.9399048
2013	0.9858731



Year	Temperature
2014	1.0351694
2015	1.1874121
2016	1.2952248
2017	1.207472
2018	1.1249518
2019	1.2533703
2020	1.2852182
2021	1.1242033
2022	1.1636031
2023	1.4626105
2024	1.5430979
2025	1.6256422

Source: Met Office Hadley Centre -
HadCRUT5 (2025) – processed by Our World
in Data

[View Chart](#)



Figure 2: Global sea level rise

Year	Global Sea Level
1881	-159.68073
1882	-189.48073
1883	-204.38072
1884	-166.61406
1885	-173.3474
1886	-171.11406
1887	-184.18073
1888	-175.88072
1889	-171.08073
1890	-176.5474
1891	-186.48073
1892	-167.5474
1893	-170.81406
1894	-170.08073
1895	-161.11406
1896	-171.4474
1897	-173.38072
1898	-169.24739
1899	-150.58073
1900	-150.31406
1901	-155.4474
1902	-145.58073
1903	-144.81406
1904	-144.78073
1905	-160.5474
1906	-154.9474
1907	-151.1474

Year	Global Sea Level
1908	-154.48073
1909	-152.31406
1910	-150.8474
1911	-149.1474
1912	-142.9474
1913	-142.0474
1914	-137.5474
1915	-108.7474
1916	-129.58073
1917	-127.78073
1918	-134.41406
1919	-141.0474
1920	-138.31406
1921	-131.91406
1922	-131.9474
1923	-128.58073
1924	-138.71407
1925	-135.61406
1926	-133.21407
1927	-133.5474
1928	-138.51407
1929	-141.3474
1930	-134.6474
1931	-130.8474
1932	-126.714066
1933	-117.54739



Year	Global Sea Level
1934	-123.8474
1935	-119.3474
1936	-120.51406
1937	-119.714066
1938	-110.91406
1939	-114.58073
1940	-111.91406
1941	-106.01406
1942	-107.2474
1943	-97.88073
1944	-105.2474
1945	-107.64739
1946	-103.54739
1947	-104.28073
1948	-87.3474
1949	-87.314064
1950	-92.28073
1951	-82.01406
1952	-85.08073
1953	-76.8474
1954	-82.18073
1955	-72.38073
1956	-82.38073
1957	-83.01406
1958	-72.2474
1959	-68.714066
1960	-70.38073
1961	-60.247395

Year	Global Sea Level
1962	-66.68073
1963	-63.88073
1964	-77.947395
1965	-66.18073
1966	-64.28073
1967	-72.91406
1968	-63.48073
1969	-59.71406
1970	-61.239754
1971	-59.363434
1972	-57.45813
1973	-53.006943
1974	-44.539375
1975	-41.241356
1976	-47.445915
1977	-44.83496
1978	-41.263718
1979	-53.21401
1980	-39.625687
1981	-30.473028
1982	-30.790474
1983	-24.037432
1984	-31.579437
1985	-33.6156
1986	-34.12176
1987	-29.50557
1988	-27.977766
1989	-29.964073

Year	Global Sea Level
1990	-23.400215
1991	-18.155539
1992	-11.176675
1993	-18.138348
1994	-21.28105
1995	-13.530466
1996	-7.0586605
1997	-6.436465
1998	-2.1894345
1999	-5.997317
2000	-5.175822
2001	0.737351
2002	-1.0583739
2003	3.2469401
2004	7.560922
2005	9.023991
2006	9.364914
2007	6.524319
2008	16.568615
2009	18.866402
2010	38.776936
2011	37.34795
2012	34.20025
2013	44.80457
2014	41.268642
2015	53.264576
2016	58.723286
2017	54.96168

Year	Global Sea Level
2018	49.370857
2019	56.607487
2020	68.81163
2021	81.6
2022	81.74
2023	80.05
2024	86.62

Source: Source: NOAA Climate.gov (2022) – processed by Our World in Data

[View Chart](#)

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SB 432 - Climate Crimes - wttm Love Final.pdf

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**SB 432 – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund
(Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Members of Judicial Proceedings:

Under the Maryland Constitution, the Maryland Attorney General has enumerated responsibilities, including investigating, commencing, prosecuting or defending cases as specified by the General Assembly or that the Governor directs to be undertaken. Over time, this body has granted additional authority:

- In 2017, MGA passed the [Maryland Defense Act \(HB 913 / Ch. 26\)](#) “Authorizing the Attorney General to employ specified assistant counsel; authorizing the Attorney General to take specified actions on civil and criminal suits and actions that are based on the federal government's action or inaction that threatens the public interest and welfare of the residents of the State; requiring the Attorney General to provide the Governor with specified notice.
- The Maryland PORT Act ([Chs. 2 and 3 2024](#)) requiring the Attorney General to “pursue all available options, including filing actions against the applicable parties, to recover for the State all possible economic damages arising from the closure of the port and the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge and, beginning July 1, 2024, and each month thereafter until all available options are exhausted or resolved, report to the General Assembly on the status of pursuing and recovering economic damages.”
- [Ch. 97 2025](#) - Support and Protections for Individuals Affected by Federal Actions (Protect Our Federal Workers Act) “the bill authorizes the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any civil or criminal suit or action that is based on the federal government’s action or inaction that threatens the public interest and welfare of the residents of the State with respect to protecting State residents who [meet certain points].”

SB 432 would again extend the Attorney General’s authority for much needed protections in Maryland. It would allow the Attorney General to pursue actions against certain fossil fuel entities for tortious or unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change through fraud, deception, or other action, inaction, or practice.

Since 1968, the coal, oil, and gas industry knew their actions would have devastating impacts on the planet.¹ The Stanford Research Institute presented a report to the American Petroleum

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/apr/13/climate-change-oil-industry-environment-warning-1968>

Institute, warning API that “the release of carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels could carry an array of harmful consequences for the planet.

Significant temperature changes are almost certain to occur by the year 2000 and these could bring about climatic change,” the 1968 Stanford report, found and republished by the Center for International Environmental Law, states. “If the Earth’s temperature increases significantly, a number of events might be expected to occur including the melting of the Antarctic ice cap, a rise in sea levels, warming of the oceans and an increase in photosynthesis....[T]here seems to be no doubt that the potential damage to our environment could be severe.”

In 1981, Exxon Mobil’s in-house climate expert warned the company of the connection between fossil fuels and climate change. Yet Exxon Mobil spent \$30 million over the next 27 years on thinktanks and researchers that promoted climate change denial.²

If the American Petroleum Institute and/or Exxon Mobil had shared this information with the public and began transitioning to clean air initiatives, taxpayers would not be paying the consequences of their lies today.

Maryland taxpayers are now saddled with increased costs, in the State budget, County budgets, and out of our own pockets. According to the Comptroller:

- “A conservative cost estimate of what it will take to safeguard businesses, homes, roads, and entire communities in Maryland from chronic flooding alone (not including other climate hazards) by 2040 under a moderate sea-level-rise scenario is \$27.4 billion.”
- “Maryland experienced 85 extreme weather events between 1980 and 2024. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, the total recovery costs for Maryland were between \$10 billion to \$20 billion dollars.”
- “To fully account for the true cost of climate change, it is crucial to consider not only the immediate impacts, such as disaster cleanup from extreme weather, but also the broader, compounding economic pressures it creates. Climate-related hazards drive up costs of materials, strain public health systems, deplete natural resources, inflate housing prices, and trigger insurance spikes — all of which pose significant obstacles to economic growth. Over time, the failure to invest in climate resilience and mitigation amplifies these financial burdens. While the state has yet to quantify the price of inaction, the following are key factors driving up costs as climate risks escalate.” These include:
 - Workforce disruption, agricultural losses, tourism decline, supply chain disruption, infrastructure damage, heat-related illnesses, power outages, flood and waterborne illnesses, rising repair costs, replacement costs, home loss, forest decline, wetland loss, freshwater fishery declines, marine fisher declines, etc.³

² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/08/exxon-climate-change-1981-climate-denier-funding>

³ <https://www.marylandcomptroller.gov/content/dam/mdcomp/md/reports/research/state-spending-series-climate-change-costs-april-2025.pdf>

SARA N. LOVE
Legislative District 16
Montgomery County

Judicial Proceedings Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

We the taxpayers should not have to bear the burden of paying for these costs, which will only increase as the global temperature rises. Just as the tobacco companies and opiod manufacturers have had to bear responsibility for their deception and actions, so too should the fossil fuel companies. Maryland's Attorney General must have the authority to hold these polluters responsible for their actions and make them pay their fair share so that taxpayers do not.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 432.

SB0432_IndivisibleHoCo_FAV_Smith.pdf

Uploaded by: Virginia Smith

Position: FAV



SB0432

Climate Crimes Accountability Act

Testimony before Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Hearing February 10, 2026

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Smith and Co-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee, my name is Name, and I represent the 1700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members). We are providing written testimony today **in support of SB0432**, which would authorize the Attorney General to investigate, commence, and prosecute or defend any suite or action that holds large fossil fuel companies accountable for libel or criminal conduct that has contributed to climate change, as well as create a Climate Crimes Accountability Fund. We thank Senator Love for introducing this bill.

From the major flooding in Western Maryland in 2025 or more frequent and stronger heat waves that caused [34 deaths](#) in 2025, a 25% increase from the year before, it is hard to deny that Maryland is already feeling the financial and health impacts of climate change. The fossil fuel industry has [known](#) since the 1970s that the carbon and other greenhouse gases they were producing were going to lead to the climate change we are seeing here in the state and around the world. They have spent years denying and fighting back against these claims, so they would not need to pay, and continue to profit off our lives for years, but that needs to stop now.

This bill will help do that by allowing the Attorney General to go after large companies who have extracted, refined, or processed coal, oil, or gas for tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct that has contributed to climate change through fraud, deception, or any other mechanism, action, inaction, or practice and then use the funds retrieved through these cases to pay for programs that prevent, mitigate, or repair the harm these companies have contributed to.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

We respectfully urge a favorable report.

Virginia Smith
Columbia, MD
21044

2026_02_10 SB 432 Climate Crimes Accountability Ac

Uploaded by: Julie Kuspa

Position: FWA

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Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
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SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
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General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

February 10, 2026

TO: The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Julie Kuspa
Deputy Principal Counsel, Assistant Attorney General, Office of the
Attorney General

RE: Senate Bill 432 – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes
Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act) (Support with
Amendments)

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) supports SB 432, Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act), with the amendments described below. SB 432 proposes to authorize the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute civil or criminal actions against large fossil fuel entities for tortious or unlawful conduct contributing to climate change, and establishes the Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to support climate harm prevention, mitigation, and repair programs.

We appreciate the intent of this legislation to hold entities accountable for climate-related harms and to establish dedicated funding for programs addressing the impacts of climate change. Climate change is one of the most pressing and destructive challenges facing our planet today, endangering public health and the environment. This bill will empower the Attorney General to take legal action against companies whose activities contribute to these harms. However, to ensure effective implementation and alignment with existing statutory frameworks for multi-defendant environmental litigation, we respectfully recommend the following amendment:

Recommended Amendment:

This bill letter is a statement of the Office of Attorney General's policy position on the referenced pending legislation. For a legal or constitutional analysis of the bill, Members of the House and Senate should consult with the Counsel to the General Assembly, Sandy Brantley. She can be reached at 410-946-5600 or sbrantley@oag.state.md.us.

Modify Section 6-106.2(a) of the State Government Article (pages 6-7, lines 5-11) to clarify that the modified Uniform Contribution Among Joint Tortfeasors Act (UCATA) exemption applies to any action brought by the Attorney General arising from or relating to alleged injuries to or threatened injuries to the environment or the natural resources of the State.

Maryland law currently presents serious impediments to settlement of any case brought against a large number of defendants who are jointly responsible for an injury because it fails to account for the percentage of culpability of each defendant. Currently, if the Attorney General settles a claim against one of several defendants, the State's ability to collect against the remaining, non-settling defendants is reduced by an equivalent share based on the total number of defendants in the case, regardless of fault. This makes it very difficult to settle with smaller, less culpable defendants in multi-defendant actions without the State giving up a large percentage of its total potential recovery. The practical impact has been to complicate, delay, and potentially foreclose settlements in multi-defendant environmental cases.

With this amendment, this legislation will make Maryland law more consistent with federal law and the laws of many other states by ensuring that defendants are responsible for their fair share of the harm. This will enable the Attorney General to effectively pursue accountability against entities that contribute to climate change while facilitating appropriate settlements with less culpable parties. We have shared proposed amendment language with the bill sponsor and remain available to work collaboratively with the Committee to refine this legislation.

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges the Committee to give SB 432 a favorable report with the amendments described above.

Cc: Members of the Committee

OAG Amendments to SB 432

On page 1, in line 7, strike “outside” and substitute “assistant”.

On page 3, in lines 4 and 6, in each instance, strike “OUTSIDE” and substitute “ASSISTANT”.

On page 6, strike beginning with “AND” in line 9 down through “ARTICLE” in line 11 and substitute “TO ANY ACTION BROUGHT BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ARISING FROM OR RELATING TO ALLEGED INJURIES TO OR THREATENED INJURIES TO THE ENVIRONMENT OR THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE STATE”.

2026 SB0432 Testimony Against 2026-02-10.pdf

Uploaded by: Alan Lang

Position: UNF

Testimony Against SB0432

Honorable Senators

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0432.

I am opposed to

- Authorizing 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;
- authorizing the Attorney General to hire outside counsel to assist with an action under the Act if the Attorney General makes a certain determination;
- establishing the Climate Crimes Accountability Fund as a special, nonlapsing fund

This bill is not necessary and moreover, is probably unconstitutional as it singles out only a certain segment of industry that the bill sponsors have deemed to be heinous. I am relatively sure that other companies besides those in the oil and gas industry cause pollution, and could be blamed for climate change. However, they are excluded.

It singles out large, publicly traded companies. Thus, one can infer that smaller companies or private held companies like Crown Petroleum can commit the same alleged crimes and not be eligible for prosecution.

This bill does not even define climate change. How can the Attorney General prove that a particular company has caused climate change when the term is not even defined? Also with so many companies in that sector operating around the world, how can just one company be blamed for an undefined change in climate? Additionally, the climate has been changing for centuries with or without pollution introduced by mankind.

Finally, this bill seems to be more concerned about how the fund from all the anticipated winning suits can and should be spent than in defining what is or is not a climate crime.

Please enter an unfavorable decision about SB0432.

Alan Lang
45 Marys Mount Road
Harwood, Maryland 20776
Legislative District 30B
410-336-9745
Alanlang1@verizon.net

February 6, 2026

FINAL_MD_AG_Bill_s.432_API_feb_2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Bernie Marczyk

Position: UNF



February 10, 2026

Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 432 Attorney General Actions, Climate Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

Dear Senator Feldman, Chair; Senator Kagan, Vice Chair; and Senate Members of Committee :

The American Petroleum Institute (API)¹ **opposes** the above referenced bill authorizing Attorney General filed lawsuits against certain entities for “tortious or otherwise unlawful conduct” that allegedly “contributed to climate change.”² The legislation targets certain energy producers for past activities that were legal, encouraged by both the state and local governments, and overwhelmingly undertaken outside of the state. Furthermore, these lawsuits would attempt to hold such companies liable under Maryland law for out-of-state emissions, and our federal system does not permit a state to apply its laws to claims seeking redress for injuries allegedly caused by interstate or worldwide emissions.³

Supporting this bill belies and runs headlong into recent legislative actions and priorities. For example, last spring the General Assembly passed and Governor Moore signed⁴ the Next Generation Energy Act – comprehensive legislation designed to increase energy generation in Maryland – which creates a fast track for constructing “dispatchable” energy generation projects, including new natural gas-fired generation on the site of retired power plants.⁵

Moreover, the legislature is being asked to vote for these bills despite previously declaring by statute “that the **production and development of oil and gas resources is important to the economic well-being of the State and the nation**,”⁶ requiring the Administration to mitigate “the impact of any severe shortage of fuel resources, including middle distillate oil, motor gasoline, residual fuel oil, and propane gas, on various classes of consumers,”⁷ and designating **gas and oil production, storage, and delivery as critical infrastructure**.⁸ And the Administration is being asked to support it despite petroleum products playing an important role in

¹ API represents all segments of America’s natural gas and oil industry, which supports nearly eleven million U.S. jobs and is backed by a growing grassroots movement of millions of Americans. Our 600 members produce, process and distribute the majority of the nation’s energy, and participate in “API Energy Excellence,” which is accelerating environmental and safety progress by fostering new technologies and transparent reporting. API was formed in 1919 as a standards-setting organization and has developed more than 700 standards to enhance operational and environmental safety, efficiency, and sustainability.

² See SB 432 (<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/bills/sb/sb0432F.pdf>) and HB 572 (<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2026RS/bills/hb/hb0572F.pdf>).

³ The legislation “authorizes 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.” It is claimed that injuries from these alleged acts require remediation, often defined to include a wide range of activities such as preparing for and recovering from extreme weather events to general infrastructure updates and preventative health care programs, most of which have nothing to do with climate change.

⁴ Approved by the Governor, May 20, 2025.

⁵ See HB 1035, Chapter 626 (2024) (https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2025RS/chapters_noln/Ch_626_hb1035T.pdf).

⁶ Md. Code Ann., Env’t § 14-101 (West).

⁷ Md. Code Ann., State Government § 9-2005 (West).

⁸ Md. Code Ann., Pub. Util. § 1-101 (West) and <https://cdp.dhs.gov/shared/se/courses/default/AWR-358%20dL%20040921/groups/196.html>.



commerce and public health through their use in transportation, industry, heating, and electricity, with Maryland’s Energy Administration finding that “[a]n uninterrupted supply of these fuels is crucial to Maryland’s economy and public safety.”⁹

In fact, the state has approved the siting and operation of some 20 petroleum terminals,¹⁰ two liquefied natural gas facilities with a total storage capacity of more than 194 million gallons, 19 natural gas, 15 petroleum, and 6 coal-fired power plants, over 16,000 miles of natural gas pipeline,¹¹ over 1,800 retail gasoline stations,¹² and state and local governments paving and repairing 75,548 lane miles of public roads¹³ using tens of thousands of tons of asphalt made from processed crude oil.¹⁴

As for authorizing lawsuits of this nature, greenhouse gas emissions are global in nature and subject to numerous federal statutory regimes, including the Clean Air Act. They are also primarily a matter of federal and international law, not state law. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit recently noted this fact in *City of New York v. Chevron Corp.*,¹⁵ where the court rejected state-law nuisance claims based on global emissions because “a federal rule of decision is necessary to protect uniquely federal interests.” As this bill seeks compensation for alleged harms to the environment based on global emissions, it is preempted by federal law.

Also, Maryland courts have recently had the opportunity to consider the issue. In January 2025, the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County dismissed two lawsuits brought by the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County against several large energy companies, holding that federal law preempted the state-law claims.¹⁶ The city and county brought claims against the energy companies for public and private nuisance, strict liability failure to warn, negligent failure to warn, trespass, and the Consumer Protection Act.

The court acknowledged that it was persuaded by the results from similar litigation across the country, including cases from the Second Circuit and the Superior Court of Delaware, and particularly by the 2024 decision in *Mayor & City Council of Baltimore v. BP P.L.C., et al.*, where Judge Brown found that “the Constitution’s federal structure does not allow the application of state law to claims like those presented by Baltimore.”¹⁷ The court ultimately dismissed the claims on preemption grounds, echoing Judge Brown’s logic from the Baltimore case. The court also found the U.S. Supreme Court’s unanimous decision in *American Electric Power Company, Inc. v. Connecticut* instructive on the likely ultimate disposition of issues arising out of

⁹ See *Maryland Liquid Fuels Plan*, Maryland Energy Administration, 21 (October 2022).

¹⁰ chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnnibpcajpcgiclfefindmkaj/https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2015/05/f22/MD-Energy%20Sector%20Risk%20Profile.pdf.

¹¹ See [Maryland Energy Sector Risk Profile.pdf](#)

¹² See *Maryland Liquid Fuels Plan* at 8.

¹³ See U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. Highway Statistic Series: State Statistical Abstracts 2022 (See https://explore.dot.gov/views/StateStatisticalAbstracts_16699101653250/DashboardALT?%3Aembed=y&%3Aiid=1&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y). A lane mile is one lane of road for one mile. A two-lane road has two lane miles per mile, and a four-lane highway has four lane miles per mile. Using lane miles is a better way to measure the amount of pavement that is on a road. (See

https://explore.dot.gov/views/StateStatisticalAbstracts_16699101653250/DashboardALT?%3Aembed=y&%3Aiid=1&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y).

¹⁴ See <https://highways.dot.gov/public-roads/september-2017/whats-your-asphalt#:~:text=Asphalt%20is%20the%20sticky%20black,refiners%20would%20give%20it%20away>.

¹⁵ See 993 F.3d 81, 90 (2d Cir. 2021).

¹⁶ See *City of Annapolis v. BP PLC, et al.* and *Anne Arundel County, Maryland v. BP PLC, et al.* Case No.: C-02-CV-21-000250 and 00565 Jan. 23, 2025).

¹⁷ See 2024 WL 3678699 (Md. Cir. Ct. July 10, 2024).



the introduction of fossil fuel products into the stream of commerce and any alleged connection between these products to climate change.¹⁸

Shortly after this decision, the Superior Court of New Jersey dismissed a comparable lawsuit filed by the New Jersey Attorney General against several energy companies, again finding the claims were preempted by federal law.¹⁹ The state's allegations included negligence, failure to warn about climate risks, trespass, public and private nuisance, violation of the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, and harm to the public trust. As in Maryland, the New Jersey court was persuaded by prior judgments from the Second Circuit, Delaware State Court, Maryland State Court, and the Supreme Court's decision in *American Electric Power Company, Inc. v. Connecticut*.

The court was most persuaded by the Second Circuit's decision that despite the state's artful pleading, the complaint is entirely about seeking damages for injuries resulting from interstate and global emissions, which is exclusively a federal law issue.²⁰

Accordingly, both the Circuit Court of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, and the Superior Court of New Jersey have now joined a **growing body of decisions from federal and state courts nationwide, finding that state tort law claims related to climate change and fossil fuel emissions are preempted by federal law.**²¹

For the bill at issue, the legislature is being asked to approve lawsuits by the Attorney General against any company above a certain size that was extracting, refining, or processing fossil fuels for conduct "that has contributed to climate change through fraud, deception, or any other mechanism, action, inaction, or practice" no matter where that company is located. The bill encourages lawsuits against an arbitrarily limited set of companies "for the cumulative impact of conduct occurring simultaneously across just about every jurisdiction on the planet,"²² essentially picking and choosing from all the greenhouse gas emitters throughout history. Greenhouse gases have been emitted from billions of individual sources across the globe into the atmosphere. And it is impossible to attribute the alleged impacts of climate change in specific geographic regions to particular sources or categories of greenhouse gas emissions with any accuracy or fairness.

In conclusion, in addition to the points made above, this bill presents a simplistic message: certain companies must collectively pay for emissions without consideration of all the technological innovations, economic benefits, and quality of life improvements that the past decades of oil and natural gas use have brought to Maryland.²³

¹⁸ See *American Electric Power Company, Inc. v. Connecticut*, 131 S. Ct. 2527 (2011).

¹⁹ See *Platkin v Exxon Mobil Corp. et al.*, No. MER-L-001797-22 (N.J. Super. Ct. Feb. 5, 2025).

²⁰ See: *City of New York v. Chevron Corp.*, 993 F.3d 81 (2d Cir. 2021).

²¹ See: *City of New York v. Chevron Corp.*, 325F.Supp. 3d 466 (S.D.N.Y. 2018), aff'd, 993 F.3d 81(2d Cir. 2021); *City of Oakland v. BP P.L.C.*, 325 F. Supp. 3d 1017 (N.D. Cal. 2018), vacated on other grounds, 960 F.3d 570 (9th Cir. 2020); *State ex rel. Jennings v. BP Am. Inc.*, 2024 WL 98888 (Del. Super. Ct. Jan. 9, 2024); cf. *City of New York v. Exxon Mobil Corp.*, No. 451071/2021, 2025 WL 209843 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. Jan. 14, 2025).

²² See: *City of New York v. Chevron Corp.* 993 F.3d at 86.

²³ See: Blackett, *Ten Inconvenient Truths About Climate Change Tort Claims* (2018).

SB 432_MDCC_Climate Crimes Accountability Act_UNFA

Uploaded by: Grason Wiggins

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 432

Date: February 10, 2026
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Position: Unfavorable

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) is the leading voice for business in Maryland. We are a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members and federated partners, and we work to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth for Maryland businesses, employees, and families.

Senate Bill 432 (SB 432) authorizes 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.

SB 432 Raises Significant Constitutional and Legal Concerns

Liability for Third-Party Use of Products

The bill would authorize efforts to hold producers and refiners liable not for their own emissions, but for downstream, third-party use of products sold into a global marketplace. Once products are lawfully sold, their use, regulation, and emissions are governed by a complex web of federal, state, and international policies. Assigning strict liability for the independent actions of countless third parties is legally unsound and unprecedented.

Federal Preemption and the Clean Air Act

Climate change and greenhouse gas emissions are inherently interstate and global in nature. Federal courts, including Maryland courts, have repeatedly found that state-law claims seeking to regulate or impose liability for global emissions are preempted by federal law, particularly the Clean Air Act. SB 432 attempts legislatively what courts have already rejected through litigation: the application of Maryland law to worldwide emissions and alleged global harms is in direct conflict with federal authority.

Takings and Excessive Fines Concerns

The scale of the financial obligations contemplated by the lawsuits authorized by SB 432 raise serious concerns under both the Takings Clause and the Excessive Fines Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The bill would require a small subset of companies to shoulder costs that are

societal in nature, disconnected from any individualized harm or proportional responsibility, and unrelated to Maryland-specific emissions.

SB 432 Conflicts with Recently Enacted State Energy Policy

SB 432 is fundamentally at odds with the General Assembly's recent energy policy decisions. Just last session, the legislature passed and the Governor signed the Next Generation Energy Act, comprehensive legislation intended to strengthen energy reliability and expand in-state generation capacity by accelerating the development of new, dispatchable energy resources, including new natural gas generation.

SB 432 moves in the opposite direction by exposing producers and refiners to sweeping liability for the lawful production and sale of energy products that Maryland continues to rely upon—and has recently taken steps to promote. Advancing punitive climate liability frameworks alongside policies designed to encourage energy generation sends contradictory signals to investors and undermines regulatory certainty at a time when energy reliability and affordability remain critical concerns.

Ongoing Litigation and Pending Maryland Study Warrant Caution Against Premature Action

Given the emerging legal challenges to similar state laws, Maryland should not advance comparable climate liability frameworks at this time. Last session the General Assembly passed HB128/SB149, establishing a statewide study on the total assessed cost of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland, requiring the Comptroller, in coordination with the Department of the Environment and Department of Commerce, to conduct a comprehensive study to assess the total cost of greenhouse gas emissions in Maryland and report the findings to the legislature by December 1, 2026.

Until that review is completed and the significant legal questions surrounding climate liability are resolved, the General Assembly should refrain from advancing sweeping climate liability legislation that would expose the State to substantial legal and economic risk.

Maryland's own courts are currently wrestling with the limits of climate liability claims, further demonstrating the legal uncertainty surrounding efforts to assign responsibility for climate-related harms through litigation. In recent decisions, Maryland Circuit Courts dismissed major climate lawsuits filed by Baltimore City, the City of Annapolis, and Anne Arundel County against fossil fuel companies, finding that those state-law claims were preempted by federal law or otherwise could not proceed under existing tort doctrines. Those dismissals are now on appeal before the Maryland Supreme Court, where justices have expressed skepticism about whether broad, global climate harm claims can be shoehorned into traditional state-law causes of action, particularly where interstate and international emissions lie at the core of the alleged injury. As these appeals unfold, the outcomes will provide crucial guidance on the judicial boundaries of

climate liability in Maryland, and lawmakers would be wise to consider these unresolved legal questions before endorsing new statutory authority for climate-related prosecutions or claims.

SB 432 Will Increase Costs for Maryland Households and Businesses

Independent cost studies examining similar theories of liability for “emissions related damages” under climate superfund proposals in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and New York demonstrate that these policies ultimately function as indirect taxes on consumers. Because energy is a fundamental input across the economy, the costs imposed on producers and refiners are passed through in the form of higher prices for fuel, electricity, transportation, food, and consumer goods.

These studies estimate billions of dollars in added costs to households, with disproportionate impacts on low- and middle-income families and small businesses that have limited ability to absorb price increases. Maryland consumers, already facing inflationary pressures, rising energy costs, and affordability challenges, would bear the real financial burden of SB 432.

SB 432 Singles Out Lawful, Heavily Regulated Activity While Ignoring Broader Context

SB 432 would allow lawsuits that arbitrarily target one segment of the economy for alleged global climate impacts while ignoring the essential role fossil fuels have played, and continue to play, in public health, transportation, emergency response, manufacturing, agriculture, and energy reliability.

The bill also disregards the fact that state and local governments, including Maryland, have long encouraged, permitted, and relied upon the production, transportation, and use of these fuels to support economic growth and public safety. At the same time, SB 432 fails to account for the significant contributions to global emissions from foreign governments, state-owned enterprises, and other non-covered entities that fall entirely outside Maryland’s jurisdiction. By design, the bill disproportionately burdens largely domestic companies while exempting foreign producers and other major contributors to global emissions, raising serious fairness and competitiveness concerns.

SB 432 Will Generate Costly Litigation, Not Reliable Revenue

States that have enacted or proposed climate superfund legislation adopting similar theories of liability for “emissions related damages” are already facing extensive and expensive litigation. These laws will leave states with years of legal costs, administrative expenses, and uncertainty, without delivering any meaningful or sustainable funding for climate resilience projects. Taxpayers may ultimately be responsible for these costs.

For the reasons outlined above, including constitutional defects, federal preemption, economic harm to consumers, and fundamental fairness concerns, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests an **unfavorable report on SB 432**.

SB432_MAPDA_unfav (2026).pdf

Uploaded by: Mike O'Halloran

Position: UNF



Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association
P.O. Box 711 ★ Annapolis, MD 21404
410-693-2226 ★ www.mapda.com

TO: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Mid-Atlantic Petroleum Distributors Association

DATE: February 10, 2026

RE: **SENATE BILL 432** – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund

On behalf of Maryland’s convenience store marketers and energy distributors, MAPDA requests the committee issue an unfavorable report on SB432.

Generally, this legislation would authorize the Attorney General to file an action against a publicly traded company that is or was involved in the extracting, refining or processing of coal, oil, or gas that has contributed to climate change.

Our members are concerned with the downstream effects of the bill. Specifically, the downstream costs incurred by distributors, retailers, and customers as a result of any judgement against these companies.

There are also concerns about the further expansion of the ability of the finder of fact to assign comparative responsibility to all parties joined in the action brought by the Attorney General. The General Assembly purposefully narrowed such assignment as it related to the allision between the Dali and the Francis Scott Key Bridge in 2024 when it passed SB680. Senate Bill 432 creates another avenue for “comparative responsibility” – an undefined term.

Taken together, this bill has serious and extremely broad implications for an entire industry and will likely end in costly lawsuits for more entities than initially contemplated.

Thank you for your consideration. We urge the Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue an **UNFAVORABLE COMMITTEE REPORT on SB432.**

Feeding and fueling the economy through gas, coffee, food, heating oil and propane.

MAPDA is an association of convenience stores and energy distributors in Maryland, Delaware & the District of Columbia.

SB 432-HB572 Unfavorable MCIES.pdf

Uploaded by: Sarah Peters

Position: UNF



Bill: SB 432/HB 572 Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund

Position: Opposition

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Energy Solutions, we respectfully submit this letter in opposition to Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act).

Marylanders are already managing tight household budgets and this bill encourages broad, high-stakes climate litigation and creates the risk that legal costs, settlement uncertainty, and market volatility will be passed through, potentially increasing rates for consumers and raising costs. The *possibility* of sweeping lawsuits can also chill investment in infrastructure and innovations Maryland needs to keep the lights on while lowering emissions.

For these reasons, the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Energy Solutions respectfully requests an unfavorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Energy Solutions, Inc.

SB 432_MAA_UNF.pdf

Uploaded by: Tim Smith

Position: UNF



Senator Will Smith, Chair
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Senator Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

February 10, 2026

RE: SB 432 – UNFAVORABLE – Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)

Dear Chair Smith, Chair Feldman, and Members of the Committees:

The Maryland Asphalt Association (MAA) represents approximately 110+ members, including 20 material producers, contractors, engineering firms, and associate members, supporting a 7,000-person workforce. MAA actively collaborates with regulatory agencies to advocate for the asphalt industry, ensuring fair regulations at both the state and federal levels. Additionally, we support adequate funding for Maryland's multimodal transportation system.

MAA strongly supports environmental safeguards and the responsible stewardship of Maryland's natural resources. Our members are committed to reducing emissions, improving efficiency, and incorporating innovative practices that lower the environmental footprint of roadway construction and maintenance. However, Senate Bill 432, would profoundly and adversely affect our industry, not only through new liabilities but also by undermining the stable economic foundation required to maintain and improve Maryland's transportation infrastructure.

SB 432 grants broad authority to the Attorney General to investigate, prosecute, or defend actions against entities for conduct that "has contributed to climate change," and establishes a special Climate Crimes Accountability Fund to support such activities.

While the goal of reducing climate impacts is laudable, the bill's design is overly expansive and creates untenable legal and financial risk for the construction materials sector, including asphalt producers and contractors. Without clear, objective standards defining what constitutes "climate-related unlawful conduct," this bill could expose everyday business activities, including lawful, regulated roadway construction and maintenance, to liability under novel tort claims. The risk of litigation under vague criteria could chill normal industry operations, discourage investment, and shift resources from core functions such as safety, quality, and environmental compliance toward legal defense and insurance costs.

The asphalt industry acknowledges the need to be part of a comprehensive strategy to address climate change, including supporting alternative fuels, cleaner equipment, and materials innovations. However, SB 432 does not present a targeted or balanced mechanism to advance those objectives. Instead, it creates a broad litigation framework that could threaten the viability of businesses essential to Maryland's transportation infrastructure. For these reasons, the Maryland Asphalt Association respectfully requests an **unfavorable report on Senate Bill 432**.

Sincerely,

Tim E. Smith, P.E.
President
Maryland Asphalt Association

COM LOI SB432-26.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Lambert

Position: INFO



**Senate Bill 432: Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund
Climate Crimes Accountability Act**

Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 10, 2026

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of information on Senate Bill 432, the Climate Crimes Accountability Act. I appreciate the Committee's careful review of this legislation.

What the bill does

Senate Bill 432 authorizes the Maryland Attorney General to bring civil actions against certain large, publicly traded fossil fuel companies whose conduct is alleged to have contributed to climate-related harms in Maryland. The bill applies to companies with a market capitalization exceeding one billion dollars that have engaged in the extraction, refinement, or processing of coal, oil, or gas.

The bill establishes a Climate Crimes Accountability Fund in the State Treasury. Any settlements or judgments obtained through actions brought under this law would be deposited into this non-lapsing fund. Monies in the fund could be used for climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience activities, including flood protection, infrastructure improvements, stormwater management, and public health initiatives. The bill also permits the Attorney General to retain outside counsel as needed.

Why this matters

Maryland is already experiencing measurable fiscal impacts from climate change. Our agency's April 2025 *State Spending Series: Climate Change Costs* (available at www.marylandcomptroller.gov/reports) report documents how rising seas, extreme heat, flooding, and severe storms are increasing state and local expenditures for disaster response, infrastructure repair, stormwater management, and public health. For instance:

1. In the Chesapeake Bay, water levels have risen over one foot during the past century and are projected to rise another 1 to 5 feet over the next 100 years. Our report found estimates of \$28 billion to address and prevent coastal flooding from sea level rise.
2. The historic flooding in Allegheny County in May 2025 has an estimated recovery and damage cost of \$34 million.
3. In 2024, Maryland suffered from a heat wave and drought that caused an estimated \$5.4 billion in losses.

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These ongoing impacts represent ongoing budgetary pressures for the State and its local governments.

Our agency is now engaged in undertaking a full study on the costs that greenhouse gas emissions have imposed on our communities, industries, counties and state. That report will be prepared over the coming year.

SB 432 proposes an important option and mechanism for addressing these costs by allowing the State to seek recovery from private actors alleged to have contributed to climate-related harms, with any proceeds directed toward resilience and mitigation efforts that align with the needs identified in the Comptroller's report.

Thank you for your consideration of this information. If you have any questions, please reach out to our Director of Government Affairs, Stephen Harrington at sharrington@marylandtaxes.gov.