



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony: [HB0572](#) - **Climate Crimes Accountability Act**
Hearing Date: Feb. 17, 2026
Bill Sponsor: Delegate Ruth
Committee: Judiciary
Submitting: Liz Feighner for Howard County Climate Action
Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Bartlett, Vice Chair Davis 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 [HB0572](#) - **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 HB0572** and recommend a **favorable** report.

Howard County Climate Action
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