



**MARYLAND
LEAGUE OF
CONSERVATION
VOTERS**

February 17, 2026

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**Support: HB 572 Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes
Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act)**

Madame Chair and Members of the Committee:

Maryland LCV Supports HB 572 - Attorney General Actions and Climate Crimes Accountability Fund (Climate Crimes Accountability Act), and we thank Delegate Ruth for her leadership on this issue.

HB 572 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](#), HB 572 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. HB 572 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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