



HB 1438: Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act
of 2024

House Economic Matters Committee
Washington Area Bicyclist Association – FAVORABLE

March 7, 2024

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Committee Members,

Fossil fuels are the major source of emissions responsible for climate change, whose societal and environmental impact has been immense and is continuing to grow. We need to move away from fossil fuels, including for transportation, which is Maryland's largest source of climate pollution. At the same time, we need to act to mitigate the consequences of our past and continued reliance on fossil fuels.

Fossil fuel companies have long been aware of the climate impact and the immense societal cost generated by their products, but they have taken no responsibility for remediating the consequences of their singularly profit-driven campaigns to boost reliance on their products and slow moves to more-climate friendly alternatives. It is appropriate that those companies be required to fund preparation for and recovery from escalating natural disasters caused by fossil-fuel consumption, as required by HB 1438, the Responding to Emergency Needs From Extreme Weather (RENEW) Act.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is an advocacy organization with 1,200 Maryland members. We fight for a just and sustainable transportation system where walking, biking, and transit are the best ways to get around. We are environmentalists and we support transit electrification and steps to eliminate fossil fuel consumption in transportation and every other sector where there are substitutes. WABA therefore supports HB 1438, the RENEW Act.

Options put forward by the RENEW Act include funding the Maryland Department of Transportation's Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program. The program's namesake, Kim Lamphier, was a fierce advocate for Maryland environmental causes and a cycling advocate who convinced the Hogan Administration to provide dedicated funding for the state's Bikeways Program, which was renamed in her memory in 2020. The Lamphier Program provides grant support for a wide range of bicycle network development activities, promoting biking as a fun, healthy transportation mode. That the RENEW Act targets additional funding for this important program – bicycling is the least polluting, healthiest, and most economical form of wheeled transportation – is a plus in our book, adding to the RENEW Act's merits.

WABA therefore urges a Favorable HB 1438 committee report and General Assembly enactment.

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