

Please find attached my testimony in support of H5424: RI Climate Superfund Act.

Corinna-Barbara Francis
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Dear Committee members,

The climate crisis is already costing Americans billions, and fossil fuel companies that knowingly caused this damage need to pay their fair share.

There is a long legal precedent for holding companies responsible for cleaning up if their activities create toxic waste, environmental harm, or harm to the health of well-being of consumers and the public. And there is a long precedent for the existence of superfund laws that establish the legal responsibility of companies for the environmental and health damages they cause. It should not be any different for fossil fuel companies.

Investigatory journalism has showed us clearly that the biggest fossil fuel companies were perfectly knowledgeable about the harm their product was causing, and they knowingly and secretly strategized to hide the truth from the public.

For decades taxpayers have been paying to clean up climate disasters -- that just keep happening more and more often -- that we know very clearly are a result of the activities of fossil fuel companies. That is just not fair. It is not fair that the companies that KNOWINGLY hid the science for decades, in order to continue making profits, should not be held accountable.

There is now growing momentum across the country to set up climate superfunds bills that make polluters pay for the damage they've knowingly caused. These funds help to protect our communities from climate disasters while making sure taxpayers aren't stuck paying for the damage and the pollution, and damage to the health and well-being of common people.

And this is not a partisan issue -- this has support across the political spectrum. Everyone -- regardless of their political affiliation suffers from the climate damage, and everyone has been paying taxes to clean up the damage from climate disasters that fossil fuel companies have caused.

Everyday people-- taxpayers and members of our communities -- have been paying for the damage that fossil fuel companies have profited from -- paying for it through having to pay taxes to cover repair of the damage after climate disasters like floods, fires, more intense hurricanes, coastal damage, etc. And also paying in their health and lives and disruption to their communities.

There is lot of momentum for this type of solution, because people feel strongly that those who profited from activities polluted our environment -- and made lots of money in the process -- should be held responsible. The feeling is very strong that it is not a question of whether fossil fuel companies should pay for the climate damage they caused, but how quickly states can put these policies into place to begin the clean, AS WELL AS to provide the correct incentives to prevent that kind of behavior in the future.

The sooner that RI adopts this policy solution the faster we can clean up our environment -- AND create the proper incentive structure to stop this kind of behavior in the future.

I strongly urge you to bring this bill to a vote and to get it passed this year. This is about fairness and accountability.

Thank-you for your attention,
Respectfully, Corinna-Barbara Francis