



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.1014/S.558
AN ACT ESTABLISHING A CLIMATE CHANGE SUPERFUND
BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE FINANCING
September 2, 2025**

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) wishes to be recorded in support of H.1014/S.558, *An Act establishing a climate change superfund*.

The MMS is a professional association of over 23,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, to provide them a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. The Medical Society recognizes the myriad ways in which climate change affects patients' health and providers' ability to care for their patients. For these reasons the Medical Society supports policies addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation. H.1014/S.588, *An Act establishing a climate change superfund*, would do just that by establishing a fund to support communities in addressing the health and environmental consequences of climate change.

It has been well established that rising greenhouse gases (GHGs), primarily from combustion of fossil fuels, are warming the planet. An article in *Science* in 2023 documented that Exxon Mobil's own scientists predicted decades ago, –with extraordinary accuracy, the rise in temperatures that would result from fossil-fuel driven emissions.¹

We are all paying the price for the health and environmental effects of that rise in temperatures. In monetary terms, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimated that last year's 27 weather and climate disasters amounted to nearly \$182.7 billion in damages.² That figure doesn't even take into account costs associated with damages to the natural environment, health care, or supply chain interruptions—nor does it include how much it would cost to prevent, through climate adaptation efforts, such destruction from occurring again.

¹Assessing ExxonMobil's global warming projections, *Science*, 13 Jan 2023
Vol 379, Issue 6628 <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abk0063>

² 2024: active year of U.S. billion-dollar weather, NOAA, January 10, 2025. <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/blogs/beyond-data/2024-active-year-us-billion-dollar-weather-and-climate-disasters>

Such events are increasingly commonplace, and the lengthy, expensive process of rebuilding in the aftermath, along with infrastructure improvements to abate future damage, currently falls on the shoulders of state and local governments and, therefore, on taxpayers.

These bills aim to hold large fossil fuel companies financially accountable for a share of the local costs of responding to the climate crisis. Modeled after the federal Superfund program that deals with toxic waste sites, they seek to establish state funds to pay for a variety of climate adaptation projects. In doing so, they would not only offer some physical protection but also ease the sizable financial strain that climate pollution puts on communities.

States have a direct interest in working to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of their residents from climate disasters. A [2024 study](#) from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and Allstate calculated that every dollar spent on resilience-building and preparedness can save communities \$13 in post-disaster cleanup costs and economic impacts.³ This could add up to billions of dollars saved per climate disaster. Looking at 25 models of different disaster scenarios, the researchers found that early investments can significantly decrease cleanup and recovery costs—no matter the type of weather event, its size, or the size of the city.

Health effects in Massachusetts

Heat waves continue to increase in frequency, length, and intensity. In the Boston area, there have been 3 heat emergencies this summer, where the heat index was 95 degrees or higher for at least 2 consecutive days. The consequences for health raise serious concern. On heat wave days in Boston, EMS calls were documented to increase 10-15%, and hospitalizations among older adults increased 33%. Emergency dept visits for children also increase significantly in extreme heat.

In addition to increasing the risk of potentially deadly heat illnesses like heat stroke, extreme heat increases risks for heart attacks, strokes, asthma exacerbations, kidney failure, and pregnancy complications. Hotter temperatures are also a major contributor to increases we are

³ *The Preparedness Payoff: The Economic Benefits of Investing in Climate Resilience*, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, June 25, 2024. <https://www.uschamber.com/security/the-preparedness-payoff-the-economic-benefits-of-investing-in-climate-resilience>

seeing in illnesses caused by ticks and mosquitoes, whose geographic range and length of active season are increasing.

Here in Massachusetts, we are seeing, for example, more cases of Lyme disease and at times of year that we did not before. Babesiosis, another tick-borne disease, which in some cases can cause life threatening anemia, increased almost 200% in MA between 2011 and 2019.

Lone Star ticks, previously confined to Southern states, are now found on Martha's Vineyard, causing skyrocketing cases of meat allergies.

These examples demonstrated the urgent need for proactive investment in climate resilience, including preventative health programs and medical care for conditions worsened by climate change. This legislation will shift the cost of climate damages off of residents and onto the corporations most responsible for the crisis. The legislation would also direct 40% of its funding to projects that benefit environmental justice communities, which bear disproportionate burdens of pollution and climate-related risks.

Fossil fuel companies are most responsible for the rise in greenhouse gases, so it is appropriate that they provide billions of dollars needed to address the consequences of climate change. Vermont and New York have already adopted superfund legislation and at least 10 other states are considering similar laws, including California, Connecticut, Hawai'i, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Virginia.

These bills are not punitive. They instead seek to correct an imbalance where taxpayers and local governments too often end up paying for the financial consequences of climate pollution caused by fossil fuel companies. For these reasons, the MMS respectfully urges a favorable report on this legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.