



## HB0531 – Utility Regulation – Consideration of Climate and Labor

### Testimony before Economic Matters Committee

Feb 27, 2020

#### Position: Favorable

Mr. Chair, Madame Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Richard Deutschmann, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **strong support of HB0531**, to bring consideration of climate change into decision making at the Public Service Commission. Indivisible Howard County is an active member of the Maryland Legislative Coalition (with 30,000+ members) and this bill is a high priority of the MLC.

Global climate change is real and playing out every week as we watch in horror the fires in Australia, historic flooding in Midwest, coastal migration due to inhabitable islands, and 65F temperatures *in Antarctica* causing accelerated ice melt. The question is no longer a matter of opinion or politics. Countries and corporations around the globe are legislating and innovating. The United Nations Framework on Climate Change concluded that the long-term temperature goal is to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Centigrade (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels. In November 2019 over 11,000 scientists from 153 countries warned the planet “clearly and unequivocally faces a **climate emergency**”.

HB0531 will require the Maryland Public Service Commission strongly consider our state greenhouse gas emissions goals when evaluating new power plant or transmission infrastructure. This is a prudent step to ensure that we as a state are coordinating our climate strategy across our electrical and power generation sectors. This bill, along with the Clean Energy Jobs Act which became law in 2019, will continue the boom in renewable energy development on the utility, commercial & industrial, and residential scales. And, will focus billions of dollars of economic investment and job creation in the technologies of the future.

The time for debate is over. Now is the time for solutions. We must act with boldness and clear direction. There is no time for delay or complacency. ***IndivisibleHoCoMD supports legislation requiring the PSC to consider climate change in its deliberations***, to ensure that new fossil fuel infrastructure is vetted consistent with our goals as a state.

State governments, municipalities, businesses and industry are responding. States such as California, New York, Colorado, and Virginia are acting boldly, pledging deep cuts in carbon emissions, and a pathway to 100% clean energy. More than 300 coal fired power plants in the U.S. have now closed or committed to closing in the near future. BP, one of the world’s oldest

(110 years) and biggest oil and gas companies has said it will cut carbon content of its products by 50% by 2050, an amount roughly equivalent to the emissions of Great Britain. BlackRock, the world's largest investment management company, will phase out their fossil fuel investments in the coming years. The list goes on and on.

This legislation will not only protect the people and resources of our state but will place us at the forefront of innovation and technology. The green energy revolution is a multi-\$trillion opportunity for our business community. Maryland is in a great position to capture a good share of this commerce with our innovation economy and superb university systems. We will be aligning with newer economic realities. Frontline communities face a disproportionate percentage of the effects of climate change. This legislation helps to level the playing field for our most vulnerable citizens. Citizens will be better protected from illnesses related to climate, hardships of weather disasters, destruction of property and loss of income. Our children and grandchildren will have a brighter future without the clear and present danger of climate change to darken that future. It is simply unconscionable to continue to develop the very fossil fuel system that are the direct cause of global climate change.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

**We respectfully urge a favorable report.**