

03/09/2020

BILL: HB 1543
TITLE: Climate Crisis and Education Act
POSITION: SUPPORT
HEARING DATE: 3/12/2020
COMMITTEE: Economic Matters
SPONSOR: David Fraser Hidalgo

Climate change is often associated with rapidly rising sea levels, erosion, ocean acidification, and increased precipitation. These environmental factors sound relatively faraway, until we take into consideration how we are affected. Floods, fires, droughts, and disease are advancing faster than many scientists predicted. If we fail to act now in response to climate change, temperatures will continue to rise, health risks due to heat stress will rise, and so will the prevalence of respiratory illness.

I'm from Baltimore City, which is disproportionately affected by climate change in Maryland, especially people of color and people earning low incomes who cannot afford to move elsewhere. HBCU students, in an already historically disenfranchised area, are the forefront of Baltimore's fight against political greed at the expense of our physical health.

A report from the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science predicts sea levels around the state could rise by as little as 1 foot or as much as 7 feet by the end of the century — this is DIRECTLY DEPENDENT on how much carbon is emitted into the atmosphere. A study by Union of Concerned Scientists showed that 23,000 MD residents are at risk of chronic flooding by 2045, affecting nearly \$3.6 billion of residential property. Those numbers more than quadruple by 2100, when flooding is likely to become a near-daily occurrence in places like the Inner Harbor and Annapolis' City Dock.

A proposal for \$27 billion sea walls across Maryland to protect homes, businesses, and farmlands from Baltimore to Ocean City, begins to show how much there is to lose in the long run if we keep focusing on this year's budgetary needs alone.

That figure does not include the costs of adapting or building new stormwater and drinking water systems. It does not include the costs of raising and repairing roads, extinguishing wildfires, replenishing beaches, building community cooling centers and air-conditioned public housing, dealing with droughts or recovering from extreme storms.

Dealing with climate change takes more than chump change. It takes accountability from the primary emitters who profit at the expense of our health. We may not be able to control our national involvement in the Paris Agreement, but we can set goals for our state that could reverberate throughout the region, which are to reduce emissions totally by 2040.

Maryland's ecological diversity, between the mountains, plains, ocean, and the largest estuary in the US, should lead the nation by example. Virginia has already committed to this cause with passing the Clean Economy Act.

SB 912: Climate Crisis and Education Act not only formalizes material solutions to reverse environmental injustice, but the plan has the mechanism to generate the revenue to implement it successfully.

For these reasons and more, I, Anjali Gulati, urge a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 1543

Respectfully submitted,

Anjali Gulati

President

Females United to Uplift, Reshape and Educate (F.U.T.U.R.E.)

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Cc: Economic Matters Committee