

EQUITY FOR ALL KIDS



To: Chair Davis and members of the Economic Matters Committee
From: Jamesha Caldwell, Education Policy Legislative Intern
Re: House Bill 1543: Environment – Climate Crisis and Education Act
Date: March 12, 2020
Position: Support

In 2018, the American Lung Association failed eight of Maryland's jurisdictions in a study conducted on high ozone pollution¹. Of the results, researchers also placed Maryland among its top twenty list of the most polluted American cities². The emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), nitrous oxide (N₂), methane (CH₄), and ozone (O₃) among others pose many dangerous threats to the environment and public health of all. In recent studies, researchers Ritchie and Roser found that when there is an increase in the emission of greenhouse gases, CO₂ in particular, the overall global temperature increases by at least 1 °C³. And while that number may seem extremely low, the increase of global temperature and the emission of greenhouse gases has astronomical impacts on our collective public health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that there are several impacts related to the onset and/or the exacerbation of detrimental health conditions and diseases⁴ such as infectious diseases, mental illness, increased rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and premature injury and/or death. Though data maintains that the results of climate change have the ability to affect everyone, the severity of effects are not felt equally. Those in lower socioeconomic statuses on average contribute the least amount of greenhouse gas emissions--while having a greater risk of experiencing the ecological and public health consequences of climate change. As a result, the children in these communities will also have a greater risk of experiencing exacerbated health conditions that can have detrimental impacts on their school performance, social ability, and overall quality of life.

HB1543 will ensure that Maryland remains in compliance with many of the shared global goals and efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. HB1543 acknowledges the influence and danger of greenhouse gases on communities and calls for fees to (a) hold active participants in the grossing emission of greenhouse gases accountable in an effort of deterrence, and (b) reinvest in the education of Maryland students through the Kirwan Initiative Fund/Blueprint for Maryland's Future Fund, as Maryland's students contribute the least to emissions and are most vulnerable to its consequences. **ACY urges a favorable report.**

¹ State of the Air, Report Card, American Lung Association, 2018

² Most Polluted American Cities, American Lung Association, 2018

³ Ritchie, H., & Roser, M. (2020). CO₂ and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Our World In Data

⁴ Climate Effects on Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019