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HB 1543/SB 912
Climate Crisis and Education Act
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Through the Climate Crisis and Education Act, the State of Maryland can accelerate our transition toward a clean, vibrant, and healthy economy for the 21st Century, and in doing so, advance a broader movement across the United States to build ambitious climate action of a sufficient pace and scale to address the current climate emergency.

In just the past few years, states across the United States, as well as cities, counties, businesses, universities, communities of faith, tribal groups, and others, have increasingly taken broader and deeper actions to address climate change and, in doing so, to build the economy of the 21st Century. Such actions are diverse, ranging from clean electricity standards, to building efficiency and transportation, to carbon taxes, and natural and working lands. But while diverse, they share a common goal: moving rapidly to address climate change in the context of our own state opportunities, and in the process to build a clean energy economy that provides a sound basis for sustained and vibrant economic growth, that yields cleaner air for our citizens, that reduces the largest risks of climate change, and provides the groundwork for the United States to become a leader in the necessary, rapid global response to the climate emergency.

The resulting groundswell of actions across the country is reflected in the burgeoning coalitions of actors taking steps to raise climate ambition in their own jurisdictions and organizations. Such coalitions include the We Are Still In (WASI) network—which now counts nearly 4,000 actors,[1] and the U.S. Climate Alliance[2] of states to which Maryland belongs—which now numbers 25 governors of both parties.

These coalitions are globally significant—and their impact is powerful and growing (Figure 1). Work that we at the University of Maryland have led, through the America's Pledge initiative on climate change,[3] recently assessed that these coalitions together represent over half of the U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, roughly 65% of the U.S. population, and nearly 70% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product. Notably, this GDP of actors addressing climate change today in the United States is equivalent to the world's second-largest economy—an economy the size of China's.

[1] Further details of the We Are Still coalition are available at https://www.wearestillin.com.
[2] Further details of the U.S. Climate Alliance are available at https://www.usclimatealliance.org.
[3] The 2019 report, *Accelerating America's Pledge,* as well as executive summary, fact sheets, and technical appendix, are available at www.AmericasPledge.com. The University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability led this report and co-leads the America's Pledge project team; I served as lead author for the 2018 and 2019 reports. The full reference is: Hultman, N., C. Frisch, L. Clarke, K. Kennedy, P. Bodnar, P. Hansel, T. Cyrs, M. Manion, M. Edwards, J. Lund, C. Bowman, J. Jaeger, R. Cui, A. Clapper, A. Sen, D. Saha, M. Westphal, W. Jaglom, J.C. Altamirano, H. Hashimoto, M. Dennis, K. Hammoud, C. Henderson, G. Zwicker, M, Ryan, J. O'Neill, E. Goldfield (2019). Accelerating America's Pledge: Going All-In to Build a Prosperous, Low-Carbon Economy for the United States. Published by the America's Pledge Initiative on Climate Change and Bloomberg Philanthropies, with the University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability, Rocky Mountain Institute, and World Resources Institute.

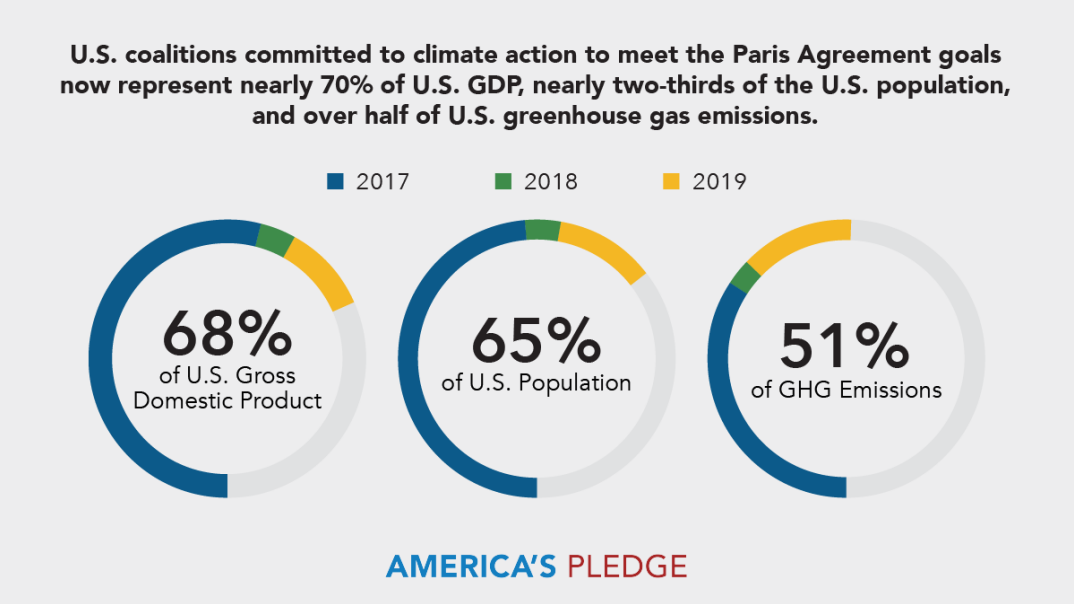

Figure 1. Across the United States, states like Maryland—as well as cities, businesses and other actors—are stepping up to address climate change and build a clean, vibrant economy for the 21st Century. These coalitions are already globally significant. Our role as a state is vitally important to build our economy at home, and in joining with the groundswell of other state actions, can lay the groundwork for a more robust American response. Source: *Accelerating America's Pledge.*

Moreover, because our constitutionally based, Federal political system in the United States devolves numerous, significant policymaking authorities to the states and other actors, the *impact* of such actions is increasingly large. For example, states have considerable scope to reduce emissions through policies such as carbon pricing, renewable energy targets, clean electricity standards, building energy efficiency codes, electric vehicle policies, land use policies, and others; and municipalities also have considerable scope through regional planning and local transportation policies.

And using these opportunities, the surprisingly good news is that our analysis demonstrates unequivocally that existing commitments from subnational actors are already making a significant impact, and laying groundwork for a robust economy-wide, comprehensive American climate policy. We estimate that by using tools and methods that are already proven by leading states, expanding bottom-up action across a broader set of states could alone drive overall U.S. emissions down by up to 37% below 2005 levels by 2030—even without additional Federal action. That means that leading actions by, for example, our State of Maryland, when joined up with similar actions by other leading states, could help the U.S. get on track toward an emissions trajectory that is roughly consistent with keeping global warming to 2 degrees Celsius. In itself, that is an extraordinarily helpful goal to reach.

Yet the science tells us we need to aim higher—to reach a global pathway to 1.5 degrees C. To do so, we will also need ambitious Federal action from Congress and the Executive branch in coming years. We demonstrate that such additional Federal action—when layered on top of ambitious state actions like those in Maryland—could in fact drive emissions down in the U.S. to roughly 49% below 2005 levels by 2030, a level consistent with scientifically based global targets of keeping warming to 1.5 degrees C. For us in Maryland, an essential message of our work is therefore that ambitious leadership by states such as ours can indeed make an ambitious national target more achievable. In other words, our leadership today can make the difference for our country's ability as a whole to effectively

implement climate policies, and that itself makes it more possible for the rest of the world to step up and match this level of ambition.

In short, Maryland's leadership on climate is existentially important—not only is it an essential component for delivering the future economy we want for our state, but can also build the basis for more ambitious U.S. and, by extension, international action to achieve global climate goals. And that is where HB 1543/SB 912 can be a potentially critical component of accelerating our action. Many Marylanders—as well as our state leaders—are aware that our State, with over 3,000 miles of shoreline, is particularly susceptible to climate change. And we have a record of climate leadership; last year, for example, the Maryland General Assembly took the important step of passing legislation to set our state's renewable energy portfolio to include 50% of clean energy sources by 2030, with a goal of 100% clean energy by 2040.

In that light, HB 1543/SB 912 would provide an enhanced structure to comprehensively address the set of linked environmental, economic, and equity complexities embedded in addressing climate change in Maryland by 2040. Helpfully, the Bill establishes a Climate Crisis Council that designates scientific and expert authorities to develop a roadmap for emissions reductions targets. It also can support a rapid and orderly transition toward a clean energy economy by imposing a pollution fee on certain high emitting sources. Such fees are a well-understood, economically sound, and effective strategy for providing the right incentives for the private sector to respond rapidly. Provisions for low-income communities are appropriately embedded to support vulnerable populations in the transition to a 100% clean energy economy.

The message of the science of climate[4] is clear: We have no more time to wait. Globally, emissions must roughly halve by 2030 and drop by 90-100% by 2050. The upside though is that *this future is also the future we want*. The people of our State are vulnerable to the climate impacts happening already today—and our action can help drive broader actions to reduce those impacts. And we in Maryland are extraordinarily well-positioned to to lead the way toward the future we want—a diversified, clean energy economy with better health and vibrant growth. Such pathways will require creativity and innovation to achieve, but our State's capabilities, political support, and existing strengths in diverse economic sectors make it possible for us to forge a new path, one that can serve not only our own residents but also provide a guidepost for building ambitious climate action across the country.

[4] The best encapsulation of this is the recent (2018) IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 Degrees C, available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/