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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 803 – Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions
(FUTURE) Act

House Appropriations Committee

February 25, 2021, 1:30pm

Chairwoman McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and my esteemed Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to present today on my legislation HB 803 – Facilitating University Transformations by Unifying Reductions in Emissions (FUTURE) Act. The bill is unique in that it was initially developed by a committed coalition of students in our state – the MaryPIRG Student Climate Action Coalition (MSCAC). As we have come to expect, student initiative is often the driving force behind climate change action and we are lucky to have these Maryland students leading the charge.

The bill ensures that all Maryland public universities achieve complete carbon neutrality by 2035, with an intermediate step requiring carbon neutrality for direct emissions and purchased electricity in 2025. The universities may utilize offsets focused in Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay watershed, or through an environmental justice project to achieve net neutrality. An environmental justice project is designed to focus on a community most impacted by environmental harms.

Combatting Climate Change

- From more extreme heat waves to shrinking sea ice and glaciers to an incredible loss of biodiversity, a warming planet's effects are far-reaching and catastrophic.
- Maryland is among the states most vulnerable to climate change. The effects of climate change in Maryland are already apparent in air quality, rising seas, summer heat waves, and more frequent and violent thunderstorms.
- All of these changes affect the health and safety of our citizens and the state's economy:
 - The American Lung Association 2020 State of the Air report rates Maryland extremely poorly for smog or ozone pollution;ⁱ
 - Between 1957 and 1963, Baltimore flooded 1.3 times per year, and Annapolis flooded 3.8 times per year;ⁱⁱ
 - Between 2007 and 2013 Baltimore flooded an average of 13.1 days annually, and Annapolis 39 days annually;ⁱⁱⁱ

- Sea levels around Baltimore increased by nearly 12 inches in the last century; ^{iv}
- Long-term temperature data show that average temperatures in Maryland have risen in the last century and will continue to rise in the future; ^v and
- Maryland's more frequent extreme rain and storm events directly damage infrastructure such as water treatment and supply, transportation, and electricity systems. ^{vi}
- Erosion, flooding, and saltwater intrusion are rapidly reshaping communities around the Chesapeake Bay.

Climate Change and the Impact on Environmental Justice

- Communities in Maryland that are already struggling are most likely to be impacted by climate change first:
 - Children in Baltimore suffer from asthma at more than twice the national rate; ^{vii}
 - In Baltimore, the hottest neighborhoods are those with the greatest level of poverty; ^{viii}
 - Underprivileged communities are on the frontline for air pollution and the health impacts of burning fuels as they are more likely to live in proximity of coal-fired power plants and waste-to-energy facilities in cities like Baltimore; and
 - Black Marylanders and residents of low-income communities experience higher rates of cancer from toxins in the air from incinerators ^{ix}.
- Targeting carbon offset projects like reforestation and renewable energy in Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and environmental justice communities will bring better air quality, water quality, biodiversity, job opportunities, and environmental education for people in our state.
- Working with low-income minority stakeholders on meaningful climate actions such as leveraging grants to clean up brownfields, promoting healthy home programs to address hazards such as lead paint, mold, or asthma triggers, or developing comprehensive flood mitigation efforts can effectively improve the environment for all and enhance the quality of life for low-income and communities of color.

What the Bill Does

By 2035, all Maryland public universities would be required to achieve complete carbon neutrality. By 2025, universities must achieve carbon neutrality for direct emissions and purchased electricity.

- **Direct emissions** (*Scope 1*) includes emissions physically produced on campus, including boilers, central heating plants, on campus power plants, university owned vehicles, refrigerants and chemicals, and agricultural sources.
- **Purchased electricity** (*Scope 2*) includes electricity produced by the burning of fossil fuels purchased by the university, but not produced on campus.
- **Induced emissions** (*Scope 3*) includes air travel for official business and faculty, staff, and student commuting to and from the campus. Schools are encouraged to also account for travel for study abroad programs, any type of other travel financed by an institution, and a school's solid waste and waste water. Scope 3 emissions must be carbon neutral by 2035.

If an institution utilizes offsets to achieve carbon neutrality it is required to use certain types of offsets:

- Starting in 2025, purchase at least 5% of its offsets in Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay watershed, or through an environmental justice offset project. An environmental justice offset project is designed to focus on a community most impacted by environmental harms.
 - In 2035, 25% of its offsets must meet this requirement and 10% must benefit an environmental justice community;
 - In 2045, 50% of its offsets must meet this requirement; and
 - In 2055, 75% of its offsets must meet this requirement.
- If carbon offsets are used to achieve carbon neutrality, they must undergo a verification process to ensure they are effective.

To ensure sustainability goals are met, institutions are required to designate or create a position to ensure climate and sustainability goals are met.

Poll after poll shows that Marylanders want to see this kind of action on climate. People of color, including Black and Latino communities and young people are especially concerned about climate change. By positioning our universities as centers of environmental leadership, we provide them with a unique tool for recruiting the best and brightest young people from around the county to join the climate fight and craft the next generation of bold new energy policies. We would be only the second university system in the nation to make this change and the first state to make this a goal for all our public universities.

Let's continue to make Maryland a leader for the nation and I urge a favorable report.

ⁱ <https://www.stateoftheair.org/city-rankings/states/maryland/>

ⁱⁱ <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/climate-change-impacts>

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Ibid.

^v <https://climatechange.maryland.gov/science/#:~:text=The%20effects%20of%20climate%20change,livelihoods%2C%20and%20the%20state's%20economy.>

^{vi} Ibid.

^{vii} https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/local-opinions/maryland-climate-change-air-quality-emissions/2021/02/18/1391172a-708a-11eb-85fa-e0ccb3660358_story.html

^{viii} Ibid.

^{ix} Ibid.