

Committee: Budget and Taxation
Testimony on: SB0228 Maryland Corps - Revisions
Organization: Climate Change Collective
Submitting: Rebekah Geller
Position: Favorable with Amendments
Hearing Date: February 9th

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members,

Thank you for considering this testimony. I urge you to vote favorably for SB0228 - Maryland Corps - Revisions with additional amendments.

This bill revises the Maryland Corps program to create a Civilian Climate Corps for Maryland, among other changes.

A progressive Civilian Climate Corps should fund and attract funding for *good* jobs with a minimum wage of \$15 per hour, the right to organize for collective bargaining, health insurance and wraparound services. It should also identify the *right projects* in green energy and climate justice.

I am writing as a high school student from the Park School of Baltimore. Right now the world is dying. We have the opportunity to work and help the world. These jobs are of the utmost importance, and the work of climate activists needs to be prioritized.

SB0228 sets a decent standard for the *good jobs* criteria, providing a \$15 minimum wage, health insurance, and wraparound services. However it does not identify the *right projects* in green energy and climate justice. Instead, it only suggests that this program will cover staffing shortages in parks. This language should be altered to explicitly include “clean energy projects and climate justice projects.”

There is another bill this session, proposed by Senator Pinsky, Chairman of the Education Health and Environmental Affairs committee, Climate Solutions Now Act, that has the opposite problem - it identifies the *right projects* for a Civilian Climate Corps but does not deliver on providing *good jobs* - which this bill does

I encourage the Committee Chair and Senate President to work closely with Senator Pinsky, whose Climate Solutions Now Act fails to identify the right projects for a Civilian Climate Corps but does not deliver on providing good jobs, to unite the best aspects of these two bills to ensure

that the version of the Civilian Climate Corps that passes this session creates both *good jobs* and the *right projects*.

Several options are available: (1) language from the Climate Solutions Now Act concerning the right projects could be incorporated into this bill, (2) the standards for wages and benefits from this bill could be incorporated into the Climate Solutions Now Act, or, as I urge, each bill should include both elements. I believe that working together to either merge the bills or create two programs that both create good jobs in the right projects will result in a beneficial Climate Corps in Maryland, so long as both criteria are met in any bill intended to serve as a Climate Corps.

I also suggest three further amendments. The bill should guarantee the right for corps members to organize for collective bargaining and to strike. Second, it should include political organizing rights outside of working hours. Finally, the bill should make any Climate Corps program open to all ages, but prioritize hiring of young people, historically marginalized, and working class groups.

Thank you for considering,
Rebekah Geller