



**Testimony of Antoine M. Thompson
Executive Director
Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition
Before the State of Maryland
House Economic Matters Committee
Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act HB708 Hearing - HB708 Support
March 4, 2022
2000 14th Street NW, Suite 330 P.O. Box 73402 Washington, DC 20056
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Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and members of the Economic Matters Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Antoine M. Thompson, Executive Director of the Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC). I am also a homeowner in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Our Coalition is one of the 90+ Clean Cities Coalitions around the country supported by the US Department of Energy. We are a public-private partnership composed of representatives of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the District government, regional governments, national trade associations, public and private companies and public utility companies including Washington Gas. We are headquartered in the District of Columbia and have programmatic responsibility for the region including District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Maryland.

The mission of our Coalition is to promote the use of clean domestic fuels to assure our nation's and region's climate security, energy independence and clean air by reducing our dependence on gasoline and diesel transportation fuels.

I personally have been engaged in the clean transportation work for more than 20 years, including being a New York State Senator and the former chair of the NY Senate Standing Committee on Environmental Conservation championing green initiatives, climate justice, and expanding access to and investments in public transit.

I am here to testify today in strong support of passing the Comprehensive Climate Solutions Act HB708.

First of all, GWRCCC urges HB708 to include in its goals to establish net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions prioritization of a just and equitable clean energy transition. To do so, we advise that the programs and services gas and electric companies are required to implement, prioritize communities disproportionately affected by climate change. We applaud that the bill includes language requiring the Department to consider communities burdened by environmental pollution, and other factors affecting community health including levels of poverty and unemployment, populations that have historically experienced discrimination based on race or ethnicity, and those living in climate vulnerable areas. However, we urge the Committee to consider implementing a Racial Equity Framework to create a more intentional strategy to address racial inequalities that perpetually occur in policy making.

As the state and nation moves toward employing more electric vehicles and alternative energy, we need to prioritize investments in clean energy, not fossil fuels. Hence we urge the Committee to limit funding towards fossil fuels to the greatest extent, through the Maryland Strategic Energy Investment Fund mentioned in HB708. This is crucial for coalitions like ours because we are a key stakeholder for the Mid Atlantic Electrification Partnership, where we are responsible for placing 200 electric vehicle (EV) chargers in DC, Maryland and Virginia. Hence, prioritizing funding into zero-emission projects will help meet Maryland's goals.

We stand ready to assist the State of Maryland as it develops comprehensive climate solutions which fosters an environment of equity and justice.