



TESTIMONY FOR HB0708 Comprehensive Climate Solutions

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Barve

Committee: Economic Matters

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0708 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of individuals and grassroots groups with members in every district in the state with well over 30,000 members.

Our members support HB0708 for many of the provisions that will help Maryland take a leadership position on mitigating greenhouse gasses and also for its environmental justice and worker transition principles.

In terms of environmental justice, HB0708 tasks the existing Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities to solicit input from all segments and communities in developing strategies to address the priorities of environmental justice communities, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants in the communities that have a disproportionate concentration of polluting industries and highways. The commission will also coordinate with vulnerable communities that are particularly challenged by storm surges, heat islands, lack of tree canopy and other effects attributable to climate change and to coordinate with and report to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), from which the MDE will act on those recommendations.

In regards to worker transition, the bill establishes a Just Transition and Retraining Work Group, composed of representatives of labor, the NAACP, and formerly incarcerated individuals, as well as registered apprenticeship sponsors, representatives of the solar and wind industry to assist in a just transition.

Finally, HB0708 creates a Climate Justice Corps composed principally of young people to create career training opportunities in the new green economy, particularly for youth from disadvantaged communities.

We also support the other top line goals of the legislation:

- increasing the greenhouse gas reduction target from 40% to 60% by an interim target and developing a plan for net-zero by 2045;

- requiring monitoring and reporting of methane emissions, a more potent greenhouse gas, from landfills;
- establishing a Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub that will act as a clearinghouse for information, technical advice and financial incentives for the public and professionals (If you want to see how a similar program in D.C. works, watch here: [Retrofit Accelerator](#)). This HUB is designed in large part to support the provisions of a companion bill, HB831, being considered by the Environment & Transportation Committee that addresses greenhouse gas emissions by large commercial and multifamily buildings;
- requiring the Public Service Commission to establish a transition planning process for gas companies and electric companies;
- establishing goals for the percentage of state funding for greenhouse gas reduction measures to be used to benefit disproportionately affected communities; and
- Expanding programs under the EmPOWER program run by the utilities to:
 - increase the percentage of EmPower funding from 2% to 2.75% by 2028
 - Encourage replacement of fossil-fuel heating systems with heat pumps, giving priority to low-income households; and
 - Encourage beneficial electrification (i.e., incentives for consumers to switch from gas to electric for purposes of reducing energy consumption, reducing consumer costs, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee. We also respectfully request consideration of the recommended amendments developed by the Climate Partners below.

Proposed Amendments
Climate Partners Coalition

Greenhouse gas reduction goals:

- Page 7, line 5-6 - Overall GHG Goal - 60% by 2032
 - Amendment - 60% by 2030 to line up with Senate (for consistency)
Climate Catalytic Capital Fund

- SB528 creates the Climate Catalytic Capital Fund to promote environmental justice and to leverage increased private capital investment in technology development and deployment. This should be added to HB708 to support the work introduced in the bill.

- Amendment: Add language from SB528 starting on page 5, line 12 until page 7 line 27.
 - Note: amendments to this section of the bill include that the Fund may not be used for a project to install new equipment that uses fossil fuels or upgrades the efficiency of existing equipment that uses fossil fuels
 - The Climate Catalytic Capital Fund should have a requirement that at least 40% of funding for greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures go to communities that are “overburdened” (as defined below) AND AT LEAST 25% OF THE RESIDENTS QUALIFY AS LOW-INCOME

Environmental Justice:

- Pages 4-6, goals for funding and targeted benefits to “disproportionately affected communities”
 - Amendment - replace “disproportionately affected communities” with “overburdened communities” with the following definition to align with other legislative initiatives and be more specific about impact. Add a requirement that 40% of funding for greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures go to “overburdened communities.”
 - “OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY” IS DEFINED AS “AT A MINIMUM, AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY, IS A COMMUNITY THAT INCLUDES ANY CENSUS TRACT FOR WHICH 3 OR MORE OF THE BELOW INDICATORS ARE ABOVE THE 75TH PERCENTILE STATEWIDE:

1. PM 2.5
2. Ozone
3. NATA diesel PM
4. NATA cancer risk
5. NATA respiratory hazard index
6. Traffic proximity
7. Lead paint indicator
8. Superfund proximity (npl sites)
9. Risk management plan facilities proximity
10. Hazardous waste proximity
11. Wastewater discharge indicator
12. Proximity to a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
13. % broadband coverage
14. Asthma Emergency Room Discharges
15. Myocardial Infarction Discharges
16. Low Birth Weight Infants
17. Proximity to power plants
18. Proximity to a TRI facility
19. Proximity to a brownfield
20. Proximity to mining operations
21. Proximity to a hazardous waste landfill
22. Proximity to an unincorporated community

AND AT LEAST 25% OF THE RESIDENTS QUALIFY AS LOW-INCOME, OR THE AREA IS DESIGNATED AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY BY THE SECRETARY [of MDE]

Petition language for MDE to designate a community as “overburdened”: “IN ORDER TO DESIGNATE AN AREA AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY THROUGH THE PETITION PROCESS, THE SECRETARY MUST MAKE FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO WHETHER THE AREA MEETS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- (A) THE ANNUAL MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF THAT AREA EXCEEDS 125 PERCENT OF THE STATEWIDE MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME;
- (B) A MAJORITY OF PERSONS AGE 25 AND OLDER IN THAT AREA HAVE A COLLEGE EDUCATION;
- (C) THE NEIGHBORHOOD DOES NOT BEAR AN UNFAIR BURDEN OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION; AND (D) THE NEIGHBORHOOD HAS MORE THAN LIMITED ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES, INCLUDING OPEN SPACES AND WATER RESOURCES, PLAYGROUNDS, AND OTHER CONSTRUCTED OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND VENUES. IF ALL OF THE CRITERIA ARE MET, THE SECRETARY MAY NOT DESIGNATE THE AREA AS AN OVERBURDENED COMMUNITY.”

Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub:

- We have concerns about housing the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub in the Maryland Energy Administration due to the Administration's input on the MCCC report and recommendations. We would like to move the administration of the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub to the Maryland Clean Energy Center.

Landfills:

- Pg 6, line 5-23 Amend the deadline for adoption of regulations January 2023 or June 2023.
- Consider appropriations to MDE's air department to support the landfill methane work

Just Transition Employment Working Group:

- Membership of the working group, on pg. 12, lines 10 strike "one representative of the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra club, selected by the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club" and replace with "Two representatives of the environmental community"
- On page 14, line 11, strike "counter" and substitute "address".
- Fenceline communities should be defined (page 14, line 20)

Climate Justice Corps:

- Page 20 - align the compensation of Climate Justice Corps participants with other civilian corps to ensure they are paid positions. This will also bring consistency with SB528.
 - Amendment: On page 20, in line 24, strike "A" and substitute "(1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, A"; in lines 25 and 26, strike "(1)" and "(2)", respectively, and substitute "(I)" and "(II)", respectively; and after line 28, insert: "(2) STIPENDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND WRAP-AROUND SERVICES SHALL BE PROVIDED TO STIPEND VOLUNTEERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH TITLE 24, SUBTITLE 11 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE."

EmPOWER:

- Page 25, line 14 - broaden empower to focus on GHG reduction as well as.
 - Amendment: On page 25, line 15, after "programs" add "AND GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) ABATEMENT PROGRAMS". On line 16, after "savings" add "AND EQUIVALENT GHG ABATEMENT."
- Page 25 line 36 - align dates for EmPOWER targets with SB528.
 - Amend to
 - 2.25% PER YEAR IN 2024 AND 2025;
 - 2.5% IN 2026;
 - 2.75% PER YEAR IN 2027 AND THEREAFTER