



**TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE ECONOMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
HB708 – Comprehensive Climate Solutions  
Position: FAVORABLE**

**By: Betsy Singer and Laura Salganik, Co-Chairs**

**Date of Hearing: March 4, 2022**

The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Howard County believes that climate change is a human induced, international security threat and one of the greatest moral issues of our time.

Specifically, we support the goals of this legislation that increase the greenhouse gas reduction target from 40% to 60% by an interim target date and developing a plan for net-zero by 2045.

We support HB708 because it begins with equity by involving black and brown communities, labor, and youth to achieve the goals of the legislation and to have a role in shaping implementation plans. For example, the central role for the existing Maryland Commission on Environmental Justice and Sustainable Communities is important to coordinate with vulnerable communities that are particularly challenged by storm surges, heat islands, lack of tree canopy and other effects attributable to climate change is important. Coordination with and reporting to the Maryland Commission on Climate Change and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) are essential for appropriate MDE actions on those recommendations. We find the Just Transition and Retraining Work Group, the Climate Justice Corps, the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub concepts highly supportive of the equity goals.

We also support features of the bill that require the Public Service Commission to establish a transition planning process for gas companies and electric companies; to establish goals for the percentage of state funding for greenhouse gas reduction measures to be used to benefit disproportionately affected communities; and to expand programs under the EmPOWER program run by the utilities to encourage beneficial electrification.

We urge you to pass HB 708 - Comprehensive Climate Solutions.