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House Bill 708 – Comprehensive Climate Solutions

Economic Matters Committee

March 4, 2022

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Background: House Bill 708 (HB708) would phase in a decrease of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions by 60% in order to achieve net-zero emissions by 2032. The bill would also set the state on a path toward achieving net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. Additionally, this bill establishes the Just Transition Employment and Retraining Working Group to ensure that workers are not adversely impacted by the transition to net-zero. The bill requires the Commission on Climate Change to develop specific recommendations that address environmental justice concerns and ensure an equitable transition.

Written Comments: The urgency of the climate crisis and the inequity of its consequences, cannot be understated. It is the single greatest existential threat we face right now, and it therefore needs to be addressed *now*. The measures outlined in this bill are ambitious and will not be easy but they are necessary. For certain parts of our state, it already is too late, and if we do not act, it will be too late for the rest.

The Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* teaches us to repair the world in which we live in. Jewish law clearly states that we are not to destroy the public domain. If passed, this bill would immediately put us on the track to reverse decades of pollution that have contributed significantly to the decline of our environment and has for generations disproportionately impacted communities of color.

The Baltimore Jewish Council and The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore are committed to repairing our world. We represent The Pearlstone Center in Reisterstown, MD, a conference center and farm that employs and teaches sustainable practices, many of which are called for in this bill. We encourage this committee to join us in our mission to create a cleaner Maryland that is healthier for everyone. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB 708.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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