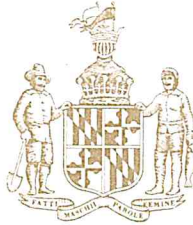


KUMAR P. BARVE

Chairman
Environment and
Transportation Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 251
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3990 · 301-858-3990
800-492-7122 Ext. 3990
Kumar.Barve@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 708 Comprehensive Climate Solutions

March 4, 2022 – House Economic Matters Committee

HB 708 Comprehensive Climate Solutions is one part of a four-bill package addressing the very real need to make significant progress holding back climate change in Maryland, a state particularly exposed to the impact from climate change given our location and geography.

First and foremost, **HB 708 sets Maryland's Greenhouse Gas Reduction goal at 60% (as compared to 2006 levels). Further, it establishes a net zero goal for 2045 with a reauthorization set for 2030.** This legislation establishes the necessary bottom line to keep our State ahead of global warming trends. Also, it will keep us ahead of the other states making inroads into green technologies and practices that will attract the growth clean energy industries that we want here. HB 708 provides that the State by June 2023 produce an administration-wide plan with specific estimates and measures to accomplish these reduction goals.

HB 708 also proposes the following measures:

Expand and strengthen State programs addressing climate justice. Under the Environment article, the bill tasks the Commission on Environmental Justice with developing the means to identify communities disproportionately affected by climate change. Further, the Department will develop specific recommendation to address concerns of these communities including greenhouse gas and other pollution.

Cutting methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills. This is an important provision as methane is considered 40 to 80 times more potent in its greenhouse effect than CO2. By their own admission, the State had not been accurately measuring landfill emissions. HB 708 requires that the Department reassess their methods and develop revised emission standards for landfills. Further, we have an amendment that the Department use the State of Oregon's most recent and comprehensive standards from 2021. Further, we are asking that the Department monitor methane emissions throughout the state, such as with natural gas transmission lines.

Establish a Just Transition Employment & Retraining Working Group. The Environment & Justice Commission will advise the Climate Commission on workforce development, training, job loss, and job creation under the bill. Specifically, they will report on the number of jobs created in green jobs industry as well as skills and training needed for future demand and strategies to develop job creation in communities affected by climate change.

Create the Climate Justice Conservation Corps. Under the auspices of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, a nonprofit organization that developed and administers the Climate Conservation Corps, HB 708 establishes the Climate Justice Conservation Corps. With a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor and others, the Corps will seek out and make grants to qualified organizations, including NGO, universities, community colleges, high schools, and others, to recruit and involve students and young adults in substantial projects that address a validated need resolving climate justice issues. The Trust has provided an amendment to streamline the organization based on their experience with the previous corps.

Promote Beneficial Electrification and Greenhouse Gas Reduction for consumers. Under the Utilities code, the Public Service Commission will work with utility providers to encourage the natural and in due course replacement of aging heating systems with heat pumps, equipment that reduce energy consumption, consumer costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Beginning in 2024, the program will not provide financial assistance for equipment and appliances using fossil fuel.

Establish the Climate Transition and Clean Energy Hub. To promote the creation and use of technology that can reduce greenhouse gas and costs for the building sector, HB 708 requires the State to develop a clearinghouse to provide the latest information and technical assistance to reduce emission and promote cost-effective energy efficiency.

All the measures contained in HB 708 Comprehensive Climate Solutions are taken from the Maryland Climate Commission recommendations, created by this Legislature in recognition of the very real and growing threat of global warming. I urge a favorable report.
