



**Testimony of Ricarra Jones, Political Director of 1199SEIU on  
SB 135 Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

February 15, 2022

Dear Chairman [Paul G. Pinsky](#), Chairman Guy Guzzone, Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, and Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee:

1199SEIU Healthcare Workers East is the largest healthcare union in the country with, over 450,000 members throughout Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Florida and Washington, D.C. **We fully support SB 135.**

SB 135 The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act (CCEJ) would positively impact Marylanders on a number of crucial fronts with transformative, market-based solutions.

The CCEJ Act incentivizes the reduction of fossil fuel emissions, and its passage would put Maryland on a commonsense, practical pathway towards a sustainable, vibrant economy. It will generate billions of dollars for investment in clean energy infrastructure, while providing protective benefits to Maryland's trade-exposed small businesses and its most vulnerable populations: low- and moderate-income households.

The CCEJ Act would set new, statewide greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, using 2006 emission levels as a baseline, of 60% by 2030, 100% by 2040, and zero emissions after 2040, to the great benefit of Marylanders. These goals complement existing programs like the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Notably, the CCEJ Act establishes two types of fossil fuel fees that include a polluter pays, no-pass through provision:

**\*Non-transportation fuel fee (Building Heat)** starts at \$15/ton, increases \$5/ton per year, and is capped at \$60/ton until the target is met.

**\*Transportation fuel fee (Gas)** starts at \$10/ton, increases \$3/ton per year, and is capped at \$37/ton until the target is met.

Further, the CCEJ Act establishes revenue from two separate funds:

\*50% of the total revenue will go to the **Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund** to invest in initiatives that improve the health and welfare of the citizens of the State, and at least 50% shall be invested in projects that are directly located within and provide meaningful benefits to environmental justice communities.

\*50% of the total revenue will go to the **Climate Crisis Benefits Fund** to be directed to low- and moderate-income households and energy-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) businesses to protect them from financial harm.

Further, the CCEJ Act creates a Climate Crisis Council which, in coordination with the Maryland Department of the Environment, will develop a plan to achieve targets, hold periodic public meetings, administer schedules of fees, and delegate distribution of funds.

Without this Bill, every segment of our environment will continue to be threatened by the climate crisis including our health and economy and this can have devastating effects on future generations. An unhealthy climate threatens a sustainable environment and thus violates our right to life.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB 135** and ask for a **FAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

Ricarra Jones  
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