

House Bill 147: Environment - Climate Crisis Plan - Requirement

Sponsored sponsored by Del Fraser-Hidalgo (cross filed with SB 250 Senator Kramer

Hearing: February 8 at 1:30 pm

House Committee: Environment & Transportation

Organization: Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Written Testimony

Position: Favorable

The Environmental Justice Ministry of the Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church strongly supports Senate bill 250 the Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act as one of its highest priority bills. This bill requires each county to prepare a Climate Crisis plan to address the effects of climate change in that county; requires each county to submit its plan to the Department of the Environment for review and feedback on or before June 1, 2024; requires the Department to provide feedback to each county on or before November 1, 2024; requires each county to finalize its plan on or before January 1, 2025; and requires each county to review and update its plan at least once every 3 years.

In our support we are quoting extensively from the legislation as it substantiates in full detail the intent and huge significance of this landmark law. The preamble very forcefully explains the reason for passing Senate Bill 250 in the following:

WHEREAS, there is definitive evidence indicating that human activity has
> increased the level of greenhouse gases in Earth's atmosphere that contribute significantly 18 to climate change; and
> WHEREAS, Climate change, if left unchecked, will have detrimental effects on
> human health, natural systems, wildlife, and infrastructure that will dramatically increase
> costs for individuals, communities, businesses, and government; and
> WHEREAS, The climate crisis threatens the ability of federal, State, and local government to deliver services, including fire protection, emergency services, flood control, 24 health care, and social services, to populations vulnerable to the effects of climate change;
WHEREAS, Maryland has 3,190 miles of shoreline that is increasingly being threatened by sea level rise caused by the climate crisis; and
> WHEREAS, Maryland has billions of dollars of real estate at risk due to sea level
> rise; and
> WHEREAS, Scientific consensus demands that the increase in global temperature
> be limited to not more than 1.5 degrees Celsius to mitigate the most destructive and
> dangerous effects of climate change; and
> WHEREAS, The time to take action to reduce climate change is now; now, therefore,
> SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
> That the Laws of Maryland read as follows-

At this point Bill 250 explains in great detail how the counties will be responsible for their Climate Plans as a critical step in responding to the climate crisis by:

- 1 Increasing the county's use of renewable energy,
- 2 expanding energy efficiency programs for residential and commercial use,
- 3 reducing energy consumption
- 4 reducing and eliminating the use of fossil fuels in new buildings,
- 5 retrofitting existing buildings to become 100% electric
- 6 transitioning all vehicles, including buses & school buses, owned or operated by the county to zero emission vehicles
- 7 providing clean, efficient & reliable public transportation for the county
- 8 designing & implementing safe infrastructure in the county to promote alternative modes of transportation
- 9 increasing the availability of electric charging stations
- 10 encouraging the use of non fossil fuel vehicles in the county
- 11 conducting a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory of existing conditions in the county
- 12 establishing greenhouse gas reduction targets
- 13 sequestering carbon dioxide generated in the county through habitat preservation, increasing urban forests and carbon farming
- 14 developing a plan to identify the most vulnerable communities to the effects of climate change
- 15 developing a plan for addressing the impacts of climate change on the most vulnerable communities in the county including: mitigating the heat island effect; providing access to emergency cooling; improving air quality
- 16 addressing climate-related health care needs
- 17 establishing energy efficient programs including financial support for heating and cooling systems
- 18 providing adaptation strategies to minimize the risks and impacts of climate change in the county
- 19 costs associated with the plan

All of the county crisis plans shall complement state & federal guidance and programs and prioritize actions that have the most meaningful impact on addressing the effects of climate change in the county. Presumably federal funds under the IRA will be available for certain parts of the Act.

For these reasons the Climate Justice Wing enthusiastically supports Bill 250 as a critical milestone in the state of Maryland's pathway to a safe and sustainable climate.

Sincerely,

Nanci Wilkinson
Environmental Justice Ministry
Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church