



Committee: Ways and Means
Testimony on: HB0493 - Department of Commerce - Office of Climate Change Assistance for Small Businesses – Establishment
Organization: Maryland Legislative Coalition Climate Justice Wing
Submitting: Laurie McGilvray, Co-Chair
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 16, 2022

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing our testimony today in support of HB493. The Maryland Legislative Coalition (MLC) Climate Justice Wing, a statewide coalition of over 50 grassroots and professional organizations, urges you to vote favorably on HB493.

HB493 will establish an Office of Climate Change Assistance for Small Businesses (Office) in the Department of Commerce to assist small businesses with transitioning to advanced clean energy and increasing their climate resilience to threats like flooding, extreme heat, and severe storms. Advanced clean energy systems may include a variety of sources from solar, geothermal, and wind to energy efficiency and conservation to more innovative technologies.

Maryland small businesses are critical to the State’s economic vitality. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, 99.5% of all businesses in Maryland are small businesses and they employ 1.2 million people or 49.3% of all employees in the State. In 2019, small firms in Maryland exported goods worth \$3.7 billion.

By their very nature, small businesses (i.e., ventures with potentially less capacity and capital) may have a harder time finding and applying for federal, state, or local government financial assistance, and incorporating advanced clean technologies and climate resilience strategies into their business plans. The Office, established under HB493, will provide guidance and other assistance to small businesses to help overcome these challenges.

Ensuring that Maryland small businesses are prepared for climate risks and can take advantage of advanced clean energy opportunities is essential for the current and future health and growth of Maryland small businesses. Therefore, we recommend a **FAVORABLE** report for HB493 in committee.