



The Garden International LLC
11890 Old Baltimore Pike, Ste G
Beltsville, MD 20705
info@thegarden.farm
www.thegarden.farm
(301) 957-4258

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House Bill 516- Climate Crisis and Environment Justice Act of 2024
House Economic Matters Committee

Position: Support

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and Members of the Committee:

The Garden International is a mushroom farm located in Prince George's County. At The Garden, our mission is to 'plantify' the world. We strive to build restorative, and sustainable systems that work in harmony with nature. We feel strongly that the tides are turning, and it is time to cultivate ecosystems that feed local communities and the economy. The Garden International writes to support House Bill 516- Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act of 2024. The groundbreaking legislation aims to establish the Climate Crisis Initiative within the Department of the Environment, tasked with assessing greenhouse gas pollution fees, providing benefits to households and employers, and funding climate-related activities to combat the pressing challenges of climate change and environmental injustice facing our state and its residents.

House Bill 516 represents a comprehensive approach to addressing the climate crisis by imposing a greenhouse gas pollution fee on fossil fuels brought into the state for combustion. This initiative is designed to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, promote energy efficiency, and support the transition to clean energy sources, while also ensuring that the economic burden of these changes does not fall disproportionately on low-income households or energy-intensive, trade-exposed employers.

This bill establishes the necessary Household and Employer Benefit Fund and the Climate Crisis Infrastructure Fund as special, nonlapsing funds is a testament to Maryland's commitment to not only address the climate crisis but also to ensure that the transition to a cleaner, more sustainable economy is just and equitable. The bill's focus on providing benefits to mitigate the impact of fees, funding emissions reduction and sequestration activities, and promoting a just economic transition is crucial for Maryland's future.

Overall, the bill's emphasis on environmental justice, particularly through the identification and support of disproportionately affected communities, aligns with our shared values of equity and inclusivity. It ensures that the benefits of our actions today are felt by all Marylanders, especially those who have been historically marginalized and bear the brunt of environmental degradation and climate change. Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 516. Thank you.

For more information, please contact:
Therese Hessler, Ashlar Government Relations
301-503-2576 | therese@ashlargr.com