



CLIMATE COALITION
Montgomery County, MD

Testimony for SB0203

Housing Innovation Program and Housing Innovation Fund–Establishment

Bill Sponsor: Senator Waldstreicher

Committee: Education, Energy, and Environment

Organization Submitting: Climate Coalition Montgomery County

Person Testifying: Dr. Jim Driscoll, Member

Position: Favorable

We are submitting testimony in favor of SB203 on behalf of the Climate Coalition Montgomery County (CC-MoCo)

CC-MoCo is a network of 21 local organizations and many individuals. We are advocates of actions aimed at meeting the goals of Montgomery County’s Climate Emergency Resolution, adopted in 2017, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035; and to build resilience to the dire impacts of climate change especially for our most vulnerable residents. We also work to support Maryland state-wide legislation that will advance these goals.

Maryland faces a crisis in affordable housing and a climate crisis. We climate activists support this bill as a key part of the solution to both.

This bill seeks to meet the critical need for large amounts of affordable new housing in Maryland by encouraging innovation in building publicly-owned, mixed-income housing, what we call social housing. By mixing apartments for different income levels, social housing avoids the known problems associated with low-income housing projects intended exclusively for low-income residents. The revenue from “market rate” higher income residents also allows the County to pay off the costs of construction and build additional social housing with no new State or County investment—a continued pool of funding for new affordable housing. By avoiding private ownership, the County is free to establish its own additional priorities. We would include net-zero electrification, climate change adaptation measures, proximity to transit, targeted amenities, affirmative action and union-hiring.

This bill provides state matching funds for projects that meet this definition of social housing. They must be publicly owned, mixed-income, meet strict affordability standards (20% of units for income under 50% of the area median income and 40% under 60%) and meet prevailing wage requirements.

We believe that it is important to keep all residents housed, particularly those residents who are most at risk. This program allows us to meet that basic human need and create the green, transit-centric society we need to survive.

We support this bill and recommend a FAVORABLE report in committee.

James Driscoll, On behalf of the Climate Coalition Montgomery County

Organizational Members of the Climate Coalition Montgomery County

350 Montgomery County

ACQ Climate (Ask the Climate Question)

Bethesda Green

Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN)

Elders Climate Action

Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian

Universalist Church

Ecosystems Study Group

Elder Climate Action

Glen Echo Heights Mobilization

Green Sanctuary Committee of the Unitarian-Universalist

Church of Silver Spring

Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions
(MC-FACS)

Montgomery Countryside Alliance

One Montgomery Green

Sugarloaf Citizens' Association

Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended/M-83
(TAME)

The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County (TCM-MoCo)

Zero Waste Montgomery County