



HoCoClimateAction.org
Howard County, Maryland

Testimony: HB0145 - Green and Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program and Fund
Hearing Date: January 23, 2025
Bill Sponsor: Delegate Boafu
Committee: Economic Matters
Submitting: Liz Feighner for HoCo Climate Action
Position: Favorable

[HoCo Climate Action](#) is a [350.org](#) local chapter and a grassroots organization representing approximately 1,400 subscribers. It is also a member of the [Climate Justice Wing](#) of the [Maryland Legislative Coalition](#).

We urge you to support HB0145, Green and Renewable Energy for Nonprofit Organizations Loan Program and Fund, which establishes a no-interest loan program enabling nonprofits to access and install clean energy systems. This bill will remove financial barriers for nonprofits and reduce their operational costs, freeing up resources to serve Marylanders even more effectively.

HoCo Climate Action has been [advocating for building decarbonization since October 2020](#) and soon after [spearheaded a campaign](#) to electrify all new buildings in Howard County. We actively supported the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (CSNA). Like most Marylanders, we want to see action on protecting our climate and health. Furnaces and water heaters fired with fossil fuel cause 17% of Maryland's greenhouse gases. CSNA commits us to a 60% GHG reduction by 2031 and net zero by 2045. The year 2031 is a mere 7 years away, and 2045 is in 21 years.

The urgent need to transition away from burning fossil fuels in buildings was outlined in several official Maryland reports finalized in December 2023:

- *The climate crisis is upon us. Within just five years, global temperatures could breach the critical 1.5°C threshold, triggering catastrophic and irreversible consequences. This long-feared catastrophe is imminent - the time for meaningful climate action is now* ([Maryland Commission on Climate Change 2023 Annual Report](#) p.3)
- *We are motivated by our shared vision of a future where every building is fossil-fuel free. In this vision, residents can spend more of their hard-earned paychecks doing what they love, and businesses can reinvest in their products and services, rather than in energy bills.* ([Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force report](#) p. 4)
- *To meet the statewide climate goals, a large portion of the statewide building stock will need to be updated.* ([Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force report](#) p.9)
- *...given the scale of Maryland's GHG reduction goals, efficiency is a necessary but insufficient building decarbonization solution, as buildings will also need to stop burning fossil fuels like*

gas and oil onsite by switching to electric equipment to meet the same needs ([Building Energy Transition Implementation Task Force report](#) p.10)

- *The transition to a clean energy economy requires millions of fuel-burning devices to be replaced with efficient, zero-emission alternatives.* ([Maryland Climate Reduction Plan](#) p. 12)
- *Billions of dollars in investments from the Inflation Reduction Act and other sources are already converging with current federal and state policies to transition to zero-emission vehicles, buildings, electricity sources, and more. New policies and investments will quicken the pace of decarbonization.* ([Maryland Climate Reduction Plan](#) p. 15)
- *Maryland's 2030 GGRA Plan called for the state to accelerate the transition of fossil fuel heating equipment in buildings to efficient electric equipment that can be powered by clean electricity.* ([Maryland Climate Reduction Plan](#) p.35)
- *Maryland is among several states moving to adopt zero-emission appliance/heating equipment standards...Modern heat pumps are more than capable of meeting 100% of the heating demand of Maryland buildings, as evidenced by the fact that heat pumps are already commonly used in buildings statewide.*
([Maryland Climate Reduction Plan](#) p. 39)

This bill represents a critical step in helping Maryland achieve its ambitious climate goals while empowering our nonprofit community to be leaders in sustainability. It not only supports our environmental mandated objectives of the CSNA but also ensures a more equitable energy transition, helping nonprofits lower their energy costs while contributing to a cleaner, healthier Maryland.

We urge a favorable report for **HB0145**.

Howard County Climate Action
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