HOUSE BILL 79

M3, M5 6lr1460
HB 1451/25 – ENT & ECM (PRE–FILED)

By: **Delegate Chisholm**
Requested: October 30, 2025
Introduced and read first time: January 14, 2026
Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT concerning

Climate Solutions Affordability Act of 2026

FOR the purpose of specifying that certain requirements under the Climate Solutions Now Act are to be carried out to the extent economically practicable, including requirements concerning achieving certain direct greenhouse gas emissions reductions from certain buildings, measuring and reporting direct emissions data to the Department of the Environment, achieving certain greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, achieving zero–emission vehicle goals relating to the State vehicle fleet and local school buses, adopting a certain construction code, and the payment of a certain prevailing wage by contractors and subcontractors participating in certain projects undertaken by investor–owned electric companies or gas and electric companies; and generally relating to the implementation of the Climate Solutions Now Act.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Environment
Section 2–1602(a) and (b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
(As enacted by Section 5 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Environment
Section 2–1602(a) and (b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)
(As enacted by Section 6 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Environment

EXPLANATION: **CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.**
[Brackets**]** indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Section 2–1205(a), (b), (c)(2) and (3), and (d)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Environment
Section 2–1205(e) and 2–1505
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2013 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Labor and Employment
Section 3–416
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2025 Replacement Volume)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Public Safety
Section 12–503
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – State Finance and Procurement
Section 4–810 and 14–418
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2021 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Environment

2–1602.

(a) The Department shall develop building energy performance standards for covered buildings that achieve**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE**:

(1) A 20% reduction in net direct greenhouse gas emissions on or before January 1, 2030, as compared with 2025 levels for average buildings of similar construction; and

(2) Net–zero direct greenhouse gas emissions on or before January 1, 2040.

(b) To facilitate the development of building energy performance standards under this section, the Department shall require the owners of covered buildings to measure and

report**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** direct emissions data to the Department annually beginning in 2025.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Environment

2–1602.

(a) The Department shall develop building energy performance standards for covered buildings that achieve**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** a 20% reduction in net direct greenhouse gas emissions on or before January 1, 2030, as compared with 2025 levels for average buildings of similar construction.

(b) To facilitate the development of building energy performance standards under this section, the Department shall require the owners of covered buildings to measure and report**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** direct emissions data to the Department annually beginning in 2025.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Environment

2–1205.

(a) The State shall develop plans, adopt regulations, and implement programs that reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with this subtitle.

(b) On or before June 30, 2023, the Department shall:

(1) Submit a proposed plan that reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031 to the Governor and General Assembly;

(2) Make the proposed plan available to the public; and

(3) Convene a series of public workshops to provide interested parties with an opportunity to comment on the proposed plan.

(c) (2) The Department shall, on or before December 31, 2023, adopt a final plan that:

(i) Reduces statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031; and

(ii) Sets the State on a path toward achieving net–zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045.

(3) The Department shall:

(i) On or before December 31, 2030, adopt a final plan that achieves net–zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045; and

(ii) On or before December 31, 2035, review and, as necessary, revise the final plan to achieve net–zero statewide gas emissions by 2045.

(d) The final plans required under subsection (c) of this section shall include:

(1) Adopted regulations that implement all plan measures for which State agencies have existing statutory authority; and

(2) A summary of any new legislative authority needed to fully implement the plans and a timeline for seeking legislative authority.

(e) **(1)** A final plan developed under this section:

[(1)**]** **(I)** May not include highway widening or additional road construction as a greenhouse gas emission reduction measure;

[(2)**]** **(II)** May include the use of carbon capture, electric distribution and transmission infrastructure improvements, and storage technology as a greenhouse gas emission reduction measure only if the technology has been scientifically proven to achieve verifiable carbon reductions;

[(3)**]** **(III)** Shall use the global warming potential for methane over a 20–year time horizon, as accepted in the most recent assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in estimating the State's greenhouse gas emissions reductions;

[(4)**]** **(IV)** Shall include policy recommendations to ensure the continued operation of Maryland's existing zero carbon emission electric generators through current operating licenses;

[(5)**]** **(V)** Shall include specific estimates of the greenhouse gas emissions reductions that could be achieved through the expansion of mass transit options; and

[(6)**]** **(VI)** Shall include specific estimates of the reductions expected from each greenhouse gas emissions reduction measure included in the plan.

(2) A FINAL PLAN ADOPTED UNDER SUBSECTION (C)(2)(I) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE IMPLEMENTED TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE.

2–1505.

(a) In this section, "incremental costs" means:

(1) In the case of a contract for the purchase of school buses, the cost difference between purchasing and operating school buses that are zero–emission vehicles and school buses that are diesel–powered vehicles; and

(2) In the case of a contract for the use of school buses, the cost difference between contracting for the use of school buses that are zero–emission vehicles and school buses that are diesel–powered vehicles.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, beginning in fiscal year 2025, a county board of education may not enter into a new contract for:

(1) The purchase of any school bus that is not a zero–emission vehicle; or

(2) The use of any school bus that is not a zero–emission vehicle, unless the school bus has an in–service date of July 1, 2024, or before.

(c) The requirements of subsection (b) of this section do not apply if:

(1) The Department determines that no available zero–emission vehicle meets the performance requirements for the county board's use; **[**or**]**

(2) The county board is unable to obtain federal, State, or private funding sufficient to cover the incremental costs associated with contracting for the purchase or use of school buses that are zero–emission vehicles**; OR**

(3) IT IS NOT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE FOR THE COUNTY BOARD TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS.

(d) A county board may enter into an agreement with an electric company to obtain monetary incentives in exchange for allowing the electric company to use the storage batteries of zero–emission buses owned or operated by the county board to access the stored electricity through vehicle–to–grid technology.

(e) The Department, in consultation with other appropriate State agencies, shall work with the county boards and private school bus contractors to develop electric vehicle infrastructure sufficient to support school buses that are zero–emission vehicles.

(f) The Department shall prioritize the use of available federal funding to carry out this section.

Article – Labor and Employment

3–416.

(a) This section applies:

(1) to a project undertaken by an investor–owned electric company or gas and electric company that:

(i) involves the construction, reconstruction, installation, demolition, restoration, or alteration of any electric infrastructure of the company, and any related traffic control activities; and

(ii) is funded by federal funds to meet the State's policy goals for electric system planning under Title 7, Subtitle 8 of the Public Utilities Article, including funds made available under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or the federal Inflation Reduction Act; and

(2) only to the portion of the project supported by the federal funds.

(b) An investor–owned electric company or gas and electric company shall require a contractor or subcontractor on a project described in subsection (a) of this section to:

(1) pay**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** the area prevailing wage for each trade employed, including wages and fringe benefits;

(2) offer health care and retirement benefits to the employees working on the project;

(3) participate in an apprenticeship program registered with the State for each trade employed on the project;

(4) establish and execute a plan for outreach, recruitment, and retention of State residents to perform work on the project, with an aspirational goal of 25% of total work hours performed by Maryland residents, including residents who are:

(i) returning citizens;

(ii) women;

(iii) minority individuals; or

(iv) veterans;

(5) have been in compliance with federal and State wage and hour laws for the previous 3 years;

(6) be subject to all State reporting and compliance requirements; and

(7) maintain all appropriate licenses in good standing.

Article – Public Safety

12–503.

(a) (1) The Department shall adopt by regulation, as the Maryland Building Performance Standards, the International Building Code, including the International Energy Conservation Code, with the modifications incorporated by the Department under subsection (b) of this section.

(2) The Department shall adopt each subsequent version of the Standards within 18 months after it is issued.

(b) (1) Before adopting each version of the Standards, the Department shall:

(i) review the International Building Code to determine whether modifications should be incorporated in the Standards;

(ii) consider changes to the International Building Code to enhance energy conservation and efficiency;

(iii) subject to the provisions of paragraph (2)(ii) of this subsection, adopt modifications to the Standards that allow any innovative approach, design, equipment, or method of construction that can be demonstrated to offer performance that is at least the equivalent to the requirements of:

1. the International Energy Conservation Code;

2. Chapter 13, "Energy Efficiency", of the International Building Code; or

3. Chapter 11, "Energy Efficiency", of the International Residential Code;

(iv) accept written comments;

(v) consider any comments received; and

(vi) hold a public hearing on each proposed modification.

(2) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph and § 12–510 of this subtitle, the Department may not adopt, as part of the Standards, a modification of a building code requirement that is more stringent than the requirement in the International Building Code.

(ii) The Department may adopt energy conservation requirements that are more stringent than the requirements in the International Energy Conservation

Code, but may not adopt energy conservation requirements that are less stringent than the requirements in the International Energy Conservation Code.

(c) The Standards apply to each building or structure in the State for which a building permit application is received by a local jurisdiction on or after August 1, 1995.

(d) **(1)** In addition to the Standards, the Department shall:

[(1)**]** **(I)** on or before January 1, 2023, adopt by regulation the 2018 International Green Construction Code; and

[(2)**]** **(II)** adopt each subsequent version of the Code within 18 months after it is issued.

(2) A REGULATION ADOPTED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION SHALL ALLOW FOR THE INTERNATIONAL GREEN CONSTRUCTION CODE TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE.

Article – State Finance and Procurement

4–810.

On or before January 1, 2030, each primary procurement unit shall ensure**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** that at least 75% of the electricity supply procured by the unit for use in State facilities is derived from no– or low–carbon energy sources.

14–418.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) "Hybrid vehicle" means an automobile that can draw propulsion energy from both of the following sources of stored energy:

(i) gasoline or diesel fuel; and

(ii) a rechargeable energy storage system.

(3) "Light–duty vehicle" means a vehicle with a gross weight of 8,500 pounds or less.

(4) "Passenger car" has the meaning stated in § 11–144.2 of the Transportation Article.

(5) "Zero–emission vehicle" has the meaning stated in § 23–206.4 of the Transportation Article.

(b) It is the intent of the General Assembly that**, TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE,** 100% of:

(1) passenger cars in the State vehicle fleet be zero–emission vehicles by 2031; and

(2) other light–duty vehicles in the State vehicle fleet be zero–emission vehicles by 2036.

(c) This section does not apply to the purchase of vehicles:

(1) that have special performance requirements necessary for the protection and welfare of the public; or

(2) by the Department of Transportation or the Maryland Transit Administration that will be used to provide paratransit service.

(d) **[**The**]** **TO THE EXTENT ECONOMICALLY PRACTICABLE, THE** State shall ensure that:

(1) (i) in fiscal years 2023 through 2025, inclusive, at least 25% of passenger cars purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles;

(ii) in fiscal years 2026 and 2027, at least 50% of passenger cars purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles;

(iii) beginning in fiscal year 2028, 100% of passenger cars purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles; and

(iv) beginning in fiscal year 2024, any passenger car purchased for the State vehicle fleet that is not a zero–emission vehicle is a hybrid vehicle; and

(2) (i) in fiscal years 2028 through 2030, inclusive, at least 25% of all other light–duty vehicles purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles;

(ii) in fiscal years 2031 and 2032, at least 50% of all other light–duty vehicles purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles; and

(iii) beginning in fiscal year 2033, 100% of all other light–duty vehicles purchased for the State vehicle fleet are zero–emission vehicles.

(e) The Department of General Services shall ensure the development of charging infrastructure to support the operation of zero–emission vehicles in the State vehicle fleet.

(f) (1) On or before December 1 each year, the Chief Procurement Officer shall submit to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, an annual report that includes, for the immediately preceding fiscal year:

(i) the total number of passenger cars and other light–duty vehicles purchased by each unit;

(ii) the number of zero–emission passenger cars and other light–duty vehicles purchased by each unit;

(iii) the current percentage of passenger cars and other light–duty vehicles in the State vehicle fleet that are zero–emission vehicles;

(iv) any operational savings associated with the purchase and operation of zero–emission vehicles; and

(v) an evaluation of the charging infrastructure that exists to support the operation of zero–emission vehicles in the State vehicle fleet.

(2) Each unit shall cooperate with the Chief Procurement Officer in the collection and reporting of the information required under this subsection.

SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That Section 2 of this Act shall take effect on the taking effect of the termination provision specified in Section 17 of Chapter 38 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2022. If that termination provision takes effect, Section 1 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect. This Act may not be interpreted to have any effect on that termination provision.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, subject to the provisions of Section 4 of this Act, this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.