



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

AFFILIATED WITH NATIONAL AFL-CIO

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HB 363 – Clean and Renewable Energy Standard (CARES) House Economic Matters Committee February 28, 2020

INFO

**Donna S. Edwards
President
Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO**

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide informational testimony on HB 363 – Clean and Renewable Energy Standard (CARES). My name is Donna S. Edwards, and I am the President of the Maryland State and DC AFL-CIO. On behalf of the 340,000 union members in the state of Maryland, I offer the following comments.

Attached to this testimony is the “Resolution on Climate Change and Jobs” that was unanimously passed at the 32nd Biennial Convention of the Maryland State and D.C. AFL-CIO, held in November of 2019. The resolution puts the issue of good job creation in the emerging clean energy sector first and foremost, with special emphasis on workers’ rights to organize, project labor agreements, labor peace, et al. The entire labor movement in Maryland is committed to ensuring that – as we transition to a “greener” energy sector – workers are not sacrificed on the altar of environmentalism. If we, as a State, are going to make greater strides towards greening our energy, we must not put the cart before the horse. We must lead with good jobs, and make the hard decisions necessary to hold harmless the workers that provide us the energy needed to live, work, and play. From that, good green energy policy will flow, allowing us to reduce our carbon emissions, fight climate change, and provide a better future for everyone – leaving no one behind.

HB 363, unfortunately, only redefines clean energy standards, and, in no way, addresses creating good green jobs with benefits, nor the community devastating loss of existing jobs in the current energy marketplace. Moreover, the bill – once again – goes after paper waste, removing it, completely, from the RPS, which remains a viable economic engine for Western Maryland.

HB 363 does recognize the great benefit of nuclear energy, and its value in reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, the bill does have an auspicious goal of reaching 100% renewable energy consumption by 2040. Both measures should be commended, and both are achievable. However, we cannot achieve them if we do not re-focus our priorities on the people doing the

work necessary to provide us our power. We must put them firmly into the center of this conversation and build our environmental policy from there. Maryland can lead on climate change, and we will if Labor is in the vanguard and the livelihoods of workers, their families, and their communities become the central point of conversation from which all policy conversations flow.

We ask that you help us re-define our priorities on climate change and green energy jobs. We ask that you join with workers in ensuring that our transition to a post-carbon energy economy lifts up everyone, and leaves no one behind.

Resolution #7: Resolution on Climate Change and Jobs

WHEREAS, numerous studies suggest that there is major job creation potential from tackling the climate crisis, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and transitioning to a low-carbon, sustainable economy; and

WHEREAS, the overall lack of high-road jobs in the green economy and the prevalence of non-union jobs in the limited existing green sectors, such as solar and residential retrofitting, have dampened enthusiasm for the long-promised “clean, green economy” among workers and labor organizations that are anxious to address the climate crisis and build a pro-worker, equitable green economy; and

WHEREAS, the fossil fuel industries have high rates of unionization; and

WHEREAS, strong job and training quality standards are needed in the clean and renewable energy sector, among them being prevailing wage, state-approved apprenticeship job training requirements, project labor agreements, and labor peace agreements; and

WHEREAS, a functioning jobs pipeline could ensure that local workers from our communities have a path to career employment by offering access to training programs such as direct-entry pre-apprenticeship programs and other skill-building opportunities; and

WHEREAS, these job and training quality standards should be central to all “climate jobs” proposals; and

WHEREAS, climate efforts should include funding and guaranteed protection for workers and communities who are displaced or negatively affected by the transition to a low-carbon economy; and

WHEREAS, the AFL-CIO has developed strong policy proposals for protecting workers who are impacted by climate protection policies. These proposals provide a just transition, including 70% wage replacement and 80% health benefit replacement for up to three years, as well as “bridge to retirement” funding for workers who are near retirement.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO supports measures that ensure that energy infrastructure development creates good jobs and builds our industrial base by requiring project labor agreements, prevailing wage, apprenticeship job training requirements, Buy Union and Buy America provisions, labor peace, card check neutrality, robust training requirements for all projects, and includes all the labor requirements passed in the Clean Energy Jobs law.

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO in facing the challenge of impacting energy policies embraces a balanced and just approach for workers, communities, manufacturers, businesses and consumers and will continue to work with community, business and environmental allies committed to recognizing the need for worker protections, rights, and sustainable wages and benefits, to maintain a wide range of energy sources, traditional and newer, to secure Maryland’s and the District of Columbia’s competitiveness.

THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Maryland State and District of Columbia AFL-CIO will advocate for legislation, administrative rules, and the development of an initiative to enable a transition that is just for workers and communities directly affected by the transition to a clean energy economy by providing income, benefit, and retraining for comparable wage jobs, as well as a bridge to retirement, as part of the just transition and concurrently support the creation of these policies in an equitable fashion.

Submitted by: *Donna S. Edwards, President*
Maryland State and D.C AFL-CIO
Delegate, AFSCME 112
Gerald W. Jackson, Secretary-Treasurer
Maryland State and DC. AFL-CIO
Delegate, UA 486

Committee: Legislation

Convention Action: Unanimously passed

