

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 926
Climate Solutions Act of 2020
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 19, 2020

My name is Madeline Graham, and I am seventeen years old. I am a lifelong Maryland resident, and I support the Climate Solutions Act.

There has been no question among my peers regarding the validity of the climate crisis that looms over our generation's head. In only the past few months, we have seen deadly floods in Jakarta, unprecedented wildfires in Australia and the Amazon rainforest and increasingly dangerous storms in the global South. In our own backyard, we have seen the effects of climate change as we have watched floods destroy Ellicott City twice over the past few years. Every time I drive through Ellicott City to visit my grandmother in Baltimore, I witness the destruction and devastation these floods have wreaked on the citizens of Ellicott City. And, as CO₂ levels and temperatures rise, it will only get worse. Rising temperatures will lead to more deaths from natural disasters, mass migration due to vulnerable areas becoming uninhabitable and economic ruin, as entire industries, such as Maryland's fishing and crabbing industry, become no longer viable.

There is no question among my peers as to whether this is normal, or as to what the cause is- we know that climate change is responsible for these deadly disasters. My generation recognizes that we have been handed a planet in peril, and that our last opportunity for action is right now. We recognize that if we fail to take this action, the world we will inherit will be more and more difficult to navigate until large parts of life as we know it become impossible. It is a difficult weight to bear, at seventeen years old. Luckily, scientists have been very clear about what we need to do in order to curb this crisis.

The 2018 IPCC report was clear on what we need to do: cut our emissions around 45% from 2010 levels by 2030. After 2030, the window closes. After 2030, if we have not significantly cut our emissions, we will find ourselves unable to do anything but watch the irreversible chain reaction we have allowed to occur as it destroys everything we hold dear. Therefore, we must act now. The Climate Solutions Act will revise Maryland's current emissions mandate to require a 60% reduction in emissions from 2006 levels, even greater than is required by the IPCC report. It will also require a plan for net zero emissions by 2045, in line with the IPCC report. It will also lead to immediate action by setting several new requirements, such as that buildings that receive 25% or more state funding produce net zero emissions. This bill will make Maryland a national leader in fighting the climate crisis, and will show young constituents like myself that our state prioritizes our future, and the future of our children. My entire life has been wasted time, time we should have spent acting on climate. Now, we must face reality- we have run out of time. We must act now, or it will be too late.

As I said, my generation has been handed a planet in peril. The thought of having nothing better to hand down to my own children is deeply disturbing.

I urge the committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 926.