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The Maryland House of Delegates

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Delegate Dana Stein Testimony in Support of HB 1425 Climate Solutions Act of 2020

Almost every day in the news, there are reports of the climate emergency we're facing, not just around the world but right here in Maryland. Record wildfires, drought and glacier melt are some of the impacts; here in Maryland, we've seen intense downpours, flooding, and rising Bay temperatures.

We last set our goals for reducing climate pollution in 2016. Since then, new climate science has been released calling for more reductions. In late 2018, climate scientists said we must reduce our emissions 60% by 2030, and reach net zero emissions by 2045, to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. That's the key tipping point when our global ecosystem could become a runaway train, due to accelerating climate impacts (for example, the ice caps melting to such a point that they no longer reflect the sun and new heat is absorbed by the Earth's surface).

It's not just international scientists who are saying this. It's also Maryland scientists. The president of UMCES will present on the science in a moment, and the previous president of UMCES has submitted written testimony.

As we saw when during a briefing in this committee, our state's draft climate plan, produced by the Maryland Department of Environment, falls short of the emissions reductions that science says we need to make.

What does the Climate Solutions Act, HB 1425, do?

First, it realigns our state's requirements for emissions reductions with the recommendations of climate scientists: 60% reduction by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2045. There is also a sunset provision in 2025 so the legislature must check in on these requirements to see if they still align with science and ensure they are achievable.

Second, the bill asks MDE to revise their climate plan based on the new targets and use best available scientific information so we are sure that our emissions inventory is accurate.

Third, the bill creates two working groups to ensure an equitable transition to a clean economy. The Climate Justice Working Group, made up of members of relevant agencies and environmental justice representatives, will identify frontline and disadvantaged communities and measure if they are currently receiving an equitable investment from state spending on climate strategies. The Climate Jobs Working Group, will bring labor leaders, climate advocates and industry representatives together to craft a plan to make sure our workers aren't left behind, especially those in fossil fuel industries.

And finally the CSA requires five immediate climate actions to reduce emissions right now: increasing energy efficiency; planting a half million trees every year; electrifying our state vehicle and bus fleet; setting a net zero emissions standard for new state-funded buildings; and requiring new, large buildings to install rooftop solar.

Regarding the fiscal note, Senate is moving the bill with amendments that say that the bill will be paid for with RGGI proceeds above \$50 million/year. It is expected that RGGI will bring in additional revenue of \$446 million in the next decade.

We will not take funding from existing SEIF programs that are currently funded by the roughly \$50 million a year RGGI brings in right now. The programs will be funded by RGGI only if revenue is above \$50 million. This is the approach the Senate took and that is our proposal to this committee as well.

For all of these reasons, I encourage a favorable report.