

Testimony of Kallan Benson

To Maryland House Environment & Transportation Committee

**In Support of**

HB 1425 Climate Solutions Act of 2020

My name is Kallan Benson, I'm 16 years old. As a teenager I have grown up in a world plagued by climate change. Of the top ten warmest years on record, all have occurred within my lifetime. We can see the effects here and now. The sunny day flooding mere blocks from your offices, and the increased rate of hospitalizations due to air pollution and extreme heat paint a picture of our new reality. These effects and others will only grow and worsen with time and continued greenhouse gas emissions.

I do not wish to imagine what the world will look like when I am grown if we do not take significant action. But I do find myself asking: Will the next generation of Marylanders get to enjoy a snowy winter? Or, the excitement of watching an osprey snatch a fish from the bay? What will happen to communities like Annapolis, Smith Island and Ellicott City? How will our state, our home, survive climate change? What future will be handed to the youth of today?

I cannot predict the answers, but I know that you have the ability to influence the outcome. You can pass the Climate Solutions Act to benefit the young Marylanders of today. Every community must find a path to net-zero emissions as a first step to ensure all the generations after us have a livable future and planet. It's a part of global change that must be made.

You can make Maryland a leader of today and tomorrow on the issue that will most define my future. Put us on a path to a healthy planet. Preserve a home for those of us with salt water in our blood and sand in our hair. I ask you to please remember the faces of the youth in your lives when you vote on this bill. Whether it's your child, grandchild or the kid next door who always waves hello. You are making a decision on their future. Please vote in favor of the Climate Solutions Act. I and the youth of our state are counting on you.

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