

Rev. Kip Banks 3/4/2020
East Washington Heights Baptist Church
Favorable: HB 1425

Dear Chairman Barve and members of the committee,

As pastor of East Washington Heights Church and a resident of Upper Marlboro, I request a favorable report on HB 1425.

I support the Climate Solutions Act because I am heartsick about the way our climate pollution is hurting our neighbors, here and throughout the world. It is simply not justice that all of us — especially the least of these — communities of color, our elderly, and our young people — have paid the price for that pollution. We've paid for dirty energy with our health. We've paid when a disrupted climate exacerbates storms like Hurricane Rita, a storm which displaced my mother from her home.

That's why we especially need a Climate Justice Working Group, like the bill says. We need both experts and people from the most affected communities to map out how we're going to get clean energy investments and pollution reduction to the communities that need it most.

I believe, like so many other faith leaders, that making a plan to address the climate crisis is in fact making a plan to care for our neighbors. In my congregation, we've installed energy efficient lighting, put in a sacreds garden to attract pollinators, planted a rain garden and implemented a recycling program with the goal of limiting the impact of climate change.

We call on you likewise to be courageous today by insisting our laws reckon with the reality we face.

My church is part of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, the denomination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.. MLK helped us imagine the future described by the prophet Isaiah, when all the inequality of our current world is redeemed. "One day," he preached, "every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

So I'm working on this bill to preach that another world is possible. The scripture assures it. The Climate Solutions Act is a way, here in Maryland, to take a meaningful step towards making that vision more real.

Thank you.