

# BALTIMORE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY

## *People ♦ Planet ♦ Prosperity*

March 3, 2020

Delegate and Committee Chair Kumar P. Barve  
Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee  
*Sent by email*

Re: HOUSE BILL 1425 – Climate Solutions Act of 2020 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Baltimore City Commission on Sustainability in **support** of House Bill 1425, which would increase to 60% the greenhouse gas emissions reductions that the State must achieve by 2030 and require the State to achieve net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The bill also establishes a Climate Justice Working Group and a Climate Jobs Working Group, and an annual requirement to plant additional trees.

The Baltimore Commission on Sustainability is a body appointed by the Mayor to oversee the creation and implementation of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan. Our members include representatives from community organizations, labor unions, environmental groups, public health and environmental justice interests, and private industry, along with one appointed elected member of the City Council. The 2019 Baltimore Sustainability Plan addresses a wide range of social, economic and environmental goals for the City, and it does so through an equity lens.

While the rise of global emissions is a serious threat to all, adverse effects from a changing atmosphere can compound existing poverty in a city like Baltimore, where almost 35 percent of households earn less than \$25,000 annually. Reducing greenhouse gases can alleviate health burdens made worse by pollutants, and reduce added stressors that harm residents in neighborhoods with concentrated poverty. An increased tree canopy can also reduce the urban heat island effect, which is worsening in these same neighborhoods as the climate changes.

Baltimore has set a greenhouse gas reduction goal of a 25 percent reduction by 2020 and 30 percent by 2025 (relative to 2007). Our 2019 Sustainability Plan envisions the need to do more, and to do it in an equitable way. A number of the Plan's strategies would be supported and enhanced by some of the provisions of HB 1425. These strategies include:

- Improve efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
  - Action 1: Update the Climate Action Plan by 2020, using an equity lens.
  - Action 2: Establish a Climate Change Advisory Committee, engaging diverse community stakeholders in identifying and implementing strategies to prevent and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to achieve a “drawdown” of carbon dioxide, and to equitably adapt to the impacts of climate change.

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- Create new programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.  
Action 2: Commit to being a “Carbon Neutral City,” meaning we would have a net zero impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Plant and establish more trees ensuring equitable planting distribution.

We urge you to support House Bill 1425.

Sincerely,



Miriam Avins  
Co-chair, Commission on Sustainability

Cc: Delegate Dana Stein