

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 1490
Clean Buildings Jobs Act of 2020
House Environment and Transportation Committee | March 4, 2020**

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The Chesapeake Climate Action Network (CCAN) Action Fund supports House Bill 1490, legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in large private buildings 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. We thank Del. Vaughn Stewart for sponsoring this legislation to kickstart necessary retrofitting of buildings in the private sector, creating good-paying jobs in the process.

CCAN Action Fund and our grassroots network throughout Maryland is dedicated to achieving a net zero greenhouse gas emissions economy by 2045, as is recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). To create this future, we must invest in frontline and historically disadvantaged communities, protect workers, create good-paying union jobs, and result in greater wealth and income equality.

According to the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE), greenhouse gas emissions from the buildings sector make up 18% of the state's climate pollution, making it the third largest climate change contributor in the state behind transportation (40%) and electricity (30%). The vast majority of emissions within the buildings sector comes from using fracked gas to heat buildings, responsible for nearly 10 MMtCO_{2e}.

We cannot meet our emissions reduction requirements by merely switching from propane to fracked gas, nor can we simply build new zero emissions buildings without addressing existing buildings. Retrofitting our largest emitting buildings--those over 25,000 square feet--is the right first step for cleaning up our heating-based pollution. Doing so will create a huge boost in trades jobs.

Our state's current draft climate action plan falls well short of leading climate science in large part because it does very little to reduce emissions in the buildings sector. However, MDE did run a policy scenario where electric heat pumps are scaled up to 95% of sales by 2050, and emissions in the sector are almost completely eliminated. This is the kind of action we will have to take to avert the worst consequences of the climate crisis. The only question is: do we have the political will to do it?

We urge the Committee to give House Bill 1490 a favorable report.

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