



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 1490

Environment – Building Energy Performance Standards and Greenhouse Gas 3 Emissions Reduction
Targets 4 (Clean Buildings Jobs Act of 2020)

DATE: MARCH 4, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation SUPPORTS HB 1490. This bill would require private owners of buildings to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and require the State of Maryland to establish greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets of 40% by 2030 and 80% by 2050. Incentives from the Strategic Energy Investment Fund would assist building owners in reaching the targets.

Monitoring greenhouse gas emission produced by buildings and targeting reductions for those emissions supports the State's interest in mitigating climate change.

The US Environmental Protection Agency's 2017 estimates indicate that the industrial and commercial/residential sectors make up 34% of greenhouse gas emissions.¹ Large buildings take more energy to heat and cool and can be less efficient than smaller buildings. HB 1490 would fairly apply greenhouse gas reduction targets currently being implemented or developed in the energy and transportation sectors to meet statewide greenhouse gas reduction goals. Moreover, the requirement for greenhouse gas reduction in buildings will help incentivize more energy efficient buildings in the future.

Greenhouse gases contribute to climate change. Climate change has immediate and drastic impacts on Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. In low-lying areas, storm surges combined with higher sea levels and increasingly erratic storm activity may create a "perfect storm" that will flood thousands of acres. Many of those areas are economically disadvantaged, and the combination of flooding and limited access to emergency facilities—facilities that might themselves be flooded—could be disastrous. In Baltimore, the EPA predicts that a three-degree overall air temperature increase could increase the heat-related death toll by 50 percent, from 85 to 130 people annually.

For the Bay, warmer climates mean warmer waters, which decreases dissolved oxygen and exacerbates the Bay's fish-killing "dead zones" and contributes to algal blooms. Rising water temperatures stress fish and reduce the populations from the Bay's iconic striped bass to brook trout. Other temperature-sensitive species such as eel grass, a critical habitat plant, are at risk.

For these reasons, CBF urges a FAVORABLE report on HB 1490. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Doug Myers, Maryland Senior Scientist at (443)-482-2168 or dmyers@cbf.org.

¹ Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, US Environmental Protection Agency (last visited March 3, 2020), *available at*: <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

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